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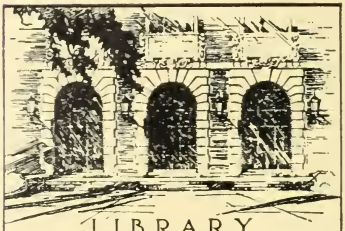

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THE STRANGERS.

THE

STRANGERS;

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MRS. NORRIS,

AUTHOR OF SECOND LOVE, &c.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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THE

STRANGERS.

CHAP. I.

A MERE CONTINUATION.

THE return of Dr. Estlake was expected in a fortnight, from the time he had set out, and his sister experienced some very uneasy sensations as the period approached. She was unacquainted with the extent of the fault committed against the strangers; but the unabating hauteur of Marcella, excited a very painful sense of its magnitude, and as she plainly perceived, that Colonel Belnard's influence

would be exerted in favour of the injured, she heartily repented, having so indiscreetly implicated herself as the injurer. Even Olivia, in her general address, though she betrayed no resentment, evinced a remembrance of what had passed, and though Mrs. Crank would willingly have made some conciliating terms before the arrival of her brother, she almost as much dreaded an explanation with her, as she feared the apprehended appeal to the Doctor.

But the uneasiness of these moments of reflection, was more than repaid in the flattering prospects of Sophia's union with Dimple, who had been ascertained by Lady Senegal, to be of family, fortune, and political influence. Mrs. Crank now discovered the extent of that indignity

offered by her brother to Sophia, in deeming her an inadequate union for Colonel Belnard, and in the conviction of her friend's assurances, that Dimple was superior in point of fortune; she exultingly looked forward to the moment in which she might proclaim to the world, that so considerable a conquest was destined for her daughter's acceptance. Dimple and his friends, were each succeeding day, received with new marks of complacency, and Mrs. Crank being properly warned by Lady Senegal, carefully avoided all measures that might look like hurrying the lover to a declaration, before his heart was so irretrievably lost, as to render the suggestions of prudence unavailing. She had, herself, indeed, observed the necessity of this last precaution, as Dimple's assiduities were

often restrained in the presence of Colonel Belnard; but in his absence, he poured forth a melifluous strain of hopes and fears, which he cautiously avoided explaining, and Sophia and her mother hourly expected that he would end the misery of suspense, in publicly claiming the happiness he panted for.

Lady Senegal had certainly failed in the object of her journey to Windsor, as of the mystery attending the strangers, there was no probability of a dissolution; but the occurrences of each day, furnished a superfices on which she readily traced new plans, and in the projection of these, she found a compensation for past disappointment. Sophia was a girl of spirit; sanguine in her hopes, impatient in her temper, vain of her personal attractions,

and though extremely good-natured, was quick and ardent in resentment. By some giddy action she might forfeit the favour of her uncle, and he was not *too old to marry*. The Colonel's continued devotion to Marcella, was another fortunate circumstance, as if she drew him into a marriage, the Doctor, by the help of Mrs. Crank's invectives, might discard him also, and a number of incidents would then gradually arise, all of which might be turned to account. Thus did her Ladyship, with the piercing foresight of a lynx, continue to survey the daily progress of events, and with unbounded professions of friendship and much real interest, participated in the feelings of her companions. Thus did she soar as a falcon over its prey, ever on the watch for what might feed her insatiable hunger

for intrigues, and in any way promote the object of her wishes.

To these purposes Waltheim was no longer necessary, and he was therefore permitted to follow the bent of his own inclinations. 'Tis true, he was giddy, he was weak; ever ready to be in the right, yet never steady against the wrong; but his heart was open to conviction, and in returning to the influence of love, he would gladly have submitted to the renewed admonitions of friendship. In despite of Lady Senegal and her coadjutors, his heart had not really believed the perfidy of Belnard; instead of the society and reproof, so long and so perseveringly offered him by that friend, he now saw that he continually avoided him, and anxious to regain his good opinion, he

became submissive and attentive, as he had before been refractory and negligent, and returned to the duties of love and friendship, which he had lately given up for vanity and caprice.

This alteration gave the most grateful pleasure to Olivia, who, in her anxiety to secure the returning affections of her lover, devoted to him many of those hours she had heretofore passed in seclusion. Her regard for him, though perhaps not passionate, was evidently settled, and not only in his presence, but in his absence; she entered into no conversation or no pursuit, which his talents or inclinations prevented him from sharing. She treated him with increasing distinction, and listened to his most trifling remarks with an air of satisfaction; but this

was so tempered by the innate propriety of her soul, that Belnard even in the moment of anguish, traced no symptom by which he could discover a wish on her part to excite his jealousy, to mortify his pride, to wound his peace, or to retain his affections. To him, she spoke with vivacity, and seemed to have forgotten that he ever had been more to her, than the friend of her destined husband. She took no pains to avoid him, as if apprehensive of her own strength, and when they met particularly or accidentally, whether alone, or in company, she even addressed him with the familiarity of a friend; but the dignity of a woman, who neither forgets herself, or will suffer others to forget what is due to her character, and her situation.

From any other conduct than this, he

might, perhaps, have deduced some spark of hope to supply the flame which consumed him; but in the open candour of her countenance, and the animated ease of her general behaviour, he beheld true serenity of mind. He also perceived, that Waltheim's manner towards himself confirmed her attachment, and the confidence and affection which was unceasingly though silently offered to him by his repentant friend, seemed to be considered by her as a new security in the possession of her heart. In every look, in every act, she evinced her determination not to betray the unsuspecting sincerity of Waltheim's disposition, and Belnard felt with a pang of remorse, that a retrospect of his own past conduct, afforded him as little consolation, as the dreary prospect of a

hopeless futurity could present to his view.

The return of Dr. Estlake, at length awakened him from this despondency of spirit to new concerns; the good old gentleman had slept in a damp bed in his journey home, and his constitution had suffered material injury: the gout and rheumatism as yet remained in his limbs, but they threatened the most dangerous inroads on his head and stomach, and to prevent so alarming an attack, he was compelled to confine himself to his chamber and study, in the latter of which, he was frequently attended by his young favourites. Absence seemed to have increased the strength and warmth of his affection for them, and as they devoted to him an

attention less than filial, his anxiety for their welfare amounted to a degree of enthusiasm, which rendered them doubly dear to his heart, and doubly secure of his good offices.

But the depression of mind which Colonel Belnard vainly struggled to conceal, excited all his apprehensions. He questioned him closely of the cause, and though he could not obtain a confession, he yet too plainly discovered that his own precipitancy had plunged the first object of his affections into misery, from which there was no prospect of relief. Olivia's union with Waltheim appeared more certain than ever, and in the conviction that he had been the means of destroying that happiness he would gladly have sacrificed his own existence

to preserve; the good old Doctor's health rapidly declined. His frame became exhausted, and the most alarming symptoms threatened his life.

In this period of weakness, he had but too much reason to complain of neglect from those to whom he had acted more as a husband and a father, than a brother and an uncle; they had given themselves up to advice, which rendered them contemptible, and him unhappy:--their ingratitude deeply wounded him, and though he felt more grieved than angry, he could not forget that he was less indebted to the ties of blood, than those of affection for the little enjoyment his intervals of ease permitted. To the kindness, the unremitting cares of his young companions, he therefore willingly en-

trusted himself, and it was in compliance with their entreaties that he consented to try the waters of Bath, as a remedy for the painful complaints that threatened him so fearfully.

But to inure him to air and exercise before the journey, was first necessary; his Physicians therefore recommended a short drive every morning in his own carriage, and as the weather was still fine he flattered himself with a hope of obtaining benefit from the exertion.

Belnard was his companion in these little excursions, and truly delighted to find that they promised the happiest effect. The Doctor on his return, daily appeared much better in strength and spirits,

and received the touching congratulations of Olivia, and the animated rejoicings of Marcella, with a degree of vivacity, to which they had not lately dared to hope he would ever be restored.

CHAP. II.

EXTORTED CONFESSION.

A few days perseverance in this prescription, so considerably amended the good old gentleman's health, that the journey to Bath was deferred till circumstances might render it more necessary, or perhaps entirely prevent the expedient; and the Doctor in this permission to remain peaceably at home, continued rapidly to regain his former spirits, and resume his former employments.

But in the proportion that he was thus

restored, his young friend Belnard, gradually declined: the exertions he made to conceal the uneasiness that preyed on his heart, were ineffectual. The Doctor with redoubled anxiety, watched his countenance, and while the thoughts of both were evidently engrossed by the same subject, both had, as if by mutual agreement, resolved to observe an inviolable silence, and avoid in their conversation any expression which could lead to a development of their sentiments. The confidence so long established, seemed in this instance, to have entirely ceased, and the Colonel frequently finding himself unable to resist the influence of melancholy, was compelled to seek relief in indulging it without a witness.

In returning to the study, one even-

ing, after an occasional absence, he found Olivia sitting with the Doctor; convinced of the necessity of avoiding her, he was about to retire, when the old gentleman desired him to come in.

"We want you here, Charles," said he; "Miss Vere wishes to know to whom that pretty white house belongs, that she commands a view of from her chamber windows."

"There is some mystery attached to it, I fancy," said Olivia; "Colonel Belnard is unwilling to answer."

"He is only unwilling to boast of his knight errantry," cried the Doctor; "but sit down Charles, and I will tell it myself;

I am in a talkative humour, and must have auditors."——

Belnard obeyed in silence, and he resumed.

"The white house in question belongs to a formidable giant, who knowing himself to be better than a monkey, fancies he is greater than man; and eats, drinks, sleeps, thinks, speaks, and moves, by rules of his own formation."

"Perhaps," cried Olivia, laughing, "the same comparison may be applied to to him that Marcella has discovered for Lady Senegal; who, she says, resembles the fly that clung to a coach wheel as it turned round, and in the pride of exul-

tation, exclaimed, *see!—what a dust I make!*"

The Doctor laughed heartily at the application of the fable; and declared he could never see either the gentleman or lady again without repeating—"see!—what a dust I make!"

"But, to continue my description," said he, "which I despair of making equal to your's;—this giant, like most other giants, has a daughter, who being assailed by a terrible dragon, called Waltheim, found a valiant knight to raise his arm in her defence."

"I have heard of that affair," said Olivia, "and from the dragon himself,

who, unlike the reptile tribe, breathed only praises on his vanquisher."

"Then you have probably heard," added the Doctor, "that the trump of Fame proclaimed to the world that this silent gentleman only quarreled with his friend to rob him of his mistress, and Miss Arnault herself has tacitly given assert to the assertion!"

"Miss Arnault, no doubt," interrupted Belnard, "considers the report little worthy notice; and as her partiality would do honor to any man, she is aware that a supposition so frivolous cannot require a contradiction."

"Yes; but we also know that your

partiality would do honor to any woman; —don't you think so, Olivia?"——

"Assuredly I do."——

"Then, in this respect," resumed the Doctor, "there is similarity; and similarity leads to affinity."——

"Not always," said Belnard, looking earnestly at Olivia, who betrayed a consciousness he had not dared to hope; but she instantly recovered her unembarrassed air, and even appeared amused by the Doctor's conversation.

"I have heard," said she, "that Miss Arnault is handsome, and very amiable."

"Waltheim thought her both," answered the Doctor, archly.

"That is not fair, my dear Sir;" she cried, blushing and laughing; "Miss Arnault is one of those whom I might half fear as a rival."

"Then you are mistaken in yourself," he answered; "for if I can judge, the affections that once become your's, cannot be withdrawn for *any* other woman."

"In the instance of Mr. Waltheim," said Olivia, colouring in confusion, "I may hope not."

"Many other instances may be included," rejoined the Doctor; the affections of a sister---a father."——

"Yes," said Olivia, with much earnestness,---"a father such as you have been to me---a brother too."——

"That is a good idea," resumed the Doctor; "though Charles has too little gallantry to seize the implied favour; Marcella is a charming girl, and would make an excellent wife;---would you give her to him, Olivia?"

"She is not at my disposal," she seriously replied.

"But if she were, would you select him?"

"With more delight," replied Olivia, "than I have words to express."

Belnard dared not trust his voice to

speak, and bent his head to conceal his face.

"And would you equally favour Waltheim," resumed Doctor Estlake, "if he were disengaged?"

"No;" she replied, "he is not formed to make her happy."

"Though you believe he will make you so?"

"I hope it," she replied.

"This is somewhat singular," resumed the Doctor; "I always thought you more anxious for her happiness than your own."

"Most truly I am," she returned.

"And more difficult to whom you would entrust it?"

"Certainly I am; but my fancy I may indulge for myself;—my judgment I would consult for her."

"Then your judgment is in favour of Charles?——your fancy decides for Waltheim?"——

"Both," she answered, "decide for the latter."

"And you expect, in an union so intimate as that of husband and wife—an union in which the affections must inevitably be tried by natural and accidental infirmity;—by defects of temper—of understanding;—in which obedience may

be exacted through caprice;---in such an union you expect that your *judgment* will uphold your *fancy*, and confirm esteem?"

"If you recollect your question, my dear Sir," cried Olivia, with a slight emotion of resentment, "and think it ought to be answered, I will answer it as I *think I ought*."

"You are an able logician, I see," said the Doctor; "but to my first question, since the last is forbidden:---I confess to you I am terribly anxious to see Charles married;---I must find him a wife, and you shall help me to chuse."——

"You seem to have thought of one in Miss Arnault, Sir."——

"I *have* thought of one; but do you approve Miss Arnault?"

"My dear Sir," cried Olivia, sportively, "you ask me questions which you know I cannot answer; I will therefore leave you, to avoid a repetition."

"No;" returned the Doctor in the same tone; "you shall not leave me;---as you have dubbed me father, I will exercise the same authority over you, to which my son here has already submitted."

"Colonel Belnard may well be offended at hearing himself thus disposed of," said Olivia; "I cannot therefore incur his displeasure by presuming so far."

"Then, if it depends on your voice, he must remain a bachelor?"

"I hope not!" she replied; "most sincerely I hope not; and if," she added, with some emotion; "if Miss Arnault is good and amiable as I have heard her described"——

"You would yourself join their hands, and dance at their wedding?"

"What a strange man you are!" she cried, endeavouring to disengage her hand which the Doctor held in his, and struggling with feeling, which Belnard in astonishment observed---"I will not stay a moment longer."

"An hour, if your father pleases," re-

plied the Doctor, "my dear daughter, you must sit down again."

She obeyed in silent agitation.

"I will describe Miss Arnault to you," he resumed, "and Colonel Belnard shall then, in the character of a *brother*, ask your approbation."

"And in the character of a sister," she replied, with vivacity, "I may declare I shall be very difficult to please for him.---So now let me hear."

"Then, as to beauty, I fairly own to you her face has no pretensions;---she is animated enough, but her countenance wants that open intelligence, that bewitching expression of intellectual el e

gance, which a certain daughter of mine possesses."

"You see with partial eyes," said Olivia, smiling; "but she would probably feel very little flattered by the comparison."

"In truth I think so too; for though she is modest, and even diffident, she has been brought up with a systematic good opinion of herself: those exceptions which we common observers consider as defects, she cherishes as perfections, and the more they are railed at by her friends, the more fondly she preserves them to herself."

"Are you not too severe?" said Olivia.

"No; because I esteem her sufficiently to be angry with her faults."

"She will correct them."——

"I fear not," he replied; "for though she listens to advice with respect, attention, and often with gratitude, it is only her own opinion she deems infallible."

"Perhaps," said Olivia, "if she marries a man whose understanding is superior to her own, she will conform her opinions to his wishes."

"Do *you* think this superiority necessary to happiness in the married state, Olivia?"

"Not always," she replied;---"remember, Sir, you are *describing* now."

"Then to resume," said he, "since I am thus called to order;---Miss Arnault possesses my good opinion, though not my *fancy*:---She is a sensative plant, and her feelings are most uncomfortably acute. The slightest bodily pain with her threatens ultimate dissolution, and the accidental evils of life agitate her to frenzy, or sink her to despair; yet she is not selfish, for the sufferings of others excite equal emotion. Her principles are perfectly correct, yet such is the incongruity of her character, that with unimpeached modesty she has the appearance of much personal levity, and with a mind sincere, generous, and in some instances noble, she gives to her actions and sen-

timents a garb of affectation, which prevents those who do not know her, from respecting her, and those who do, from loving her half as much as they otherwise might."

"I doubt," said Olivia, "you have exhausted the Colonel's patience by all this satyr; but in her justification I will venture to suggest how impossible he could be her knight errant, even to life's verge, if she resembles the picture you have drawn."

"O, he is a romancer," observed the Doctor, "he would sacrifice his life to more than Miss Arnault."

"Those who may claim it," said Belnard, falteringly, "will have little to

boast in the dedication of that which is of so little value."

"You are a modest man," cried the Doctor, "but neither Olivia or myself think so."

"Quite the contrary," she replied: "there is no man more highly valued by his friends, and none, I believe, more deservedly esteemed by *every* individual."

Belnard's heart throbbed so violently that he could not command himself sufficiently to bow to her compliment.

"You see," said the Doctor, "he was just going to ask your approbation, but he is apprehensive of a refusal. Do you

think Miss Arnault exactly suited to make him happy?"

"I almost think not," said Olivia.

"And do you wish him happy!"

"Sincerely;——fervently!"

"And do you know the woman who is capable of that charge?" said the Doctor, fixing his eyes on her face; "do you know the woman, who, with an enlargement of mind equal to his, would yet feel dependent on him for protection?—who with strength of soul to secure his esteem, yet possesses the feminine graces that can confirm his passion?—who in her confidence of his judgment could yield her own with a willing obedience?—

and who in every situation of life must know herself certain of his love, his friendship, and his respect.—"No interruption," he continued,—"I must finish my description."—"A woman, who as his wife, would be the boast of his family, the idolized daughter of his father and mother, the fondest object of affection to his sister;—the honor of his name, and the pride of his heart;—the sharer of his thoughts,—his companion in the gay or the serious moment;—who, with him, may contemplate a long life crowned with blessings, and in possessing the undivided and confirmed love of a husband, such as he will make, can, even in the moment of death, look forward with hope of being again united to him never to part.——Who, in the virtues and prosperity of his children, will see his memory

and her own transmitted to posterity, and, surrounded by their cares, their duty, and filial attentions, will forget the ills of life, the ravages of time, and even the pangs of dissolution!—Silent, my dear daughter!—do you wish so largely for him?"

"——Yes——sincerely."——

"And have you never seen the woman, Olivia, who, in securing a lot so enviable for herself, would also secure it to him, and render me the happiest of fathers and of friends?"

She had bent her head so low as to elude the scrutinizing enquiry of his eyes;—her bosom heaved with suppressed emotions, and she panted for breath;—but

by an effort she seemed to recover her firmness, and looked up to reply.---Belnard, pale and anxious, had fixed on her a gaze of eager suspense and apprehension; and Doctor Estlake earnestly watched to develope her emotions:---again her head sunk.——

"Olivia!" said the Doctor, with much solemnity, "you have seen her---you know her;---the veil is removed from her eyes, and the laws of virtue forbid that she shall be the wife of any other than him who possesses her heart."

To contend longer with feelings so acute was impossible----she burst into tears.

"This," exclaimed Belnard, falteringly,

" is an excess of cruelty that cannot be forgiven---I shall be implicated in this act of treachery—and—despised."

" Yes---yes;"—exclaimed Olivia;---" you have for ever lost my esteem."

" Olivia!" cried the Doctor, " I warn you that this is the crisis on which so much depends:---a lighter heart than your's will make Waltheim happier; I charge you to weigh every step before it is past recal; and remember that you at once plunge yourself into crime and misery, by so sacredly pledging affections which are not your's to give."

" They shall be mine," she replied, with resumed spirit; " in imposing on

me this mortification, Colonel Belnard has for ever forfeited"——

"He has not," interrupted the Doctor; ---"contemplate his countenance in this moment, and read his thoughts.---I solemnly assure you that I only am culpable, and I acknowledge myself premeditatedly so: your concern for his mental sufferings has lately urged you to accelerate your union with Waltheim, that by relieving Charles from suspense, he might recover his serenity; you were deceived in him, and in yourself:—he could never become indifferent to your fate, and your wretchedness could only have increased his. You are no trifler, Olivia, and the conduct which to another woman might have been indelicate, to you is but

just. From yourself you cannot escape, and I believed the most effectual means to seal your destiny, was to prevent the possibility of your receding from us.—Charles shall make no claims, I will express no hopes, till you are released from a first promise, which I well know you dare not now perform."

Olivia finding herself at liberty, arose to retire:—her cheeks glowed with mingled shame and resentment, and the heavings of her breath prevented speech.

"Suffer me, Miss Vere," said Belnard, steadily, but respectfully approaching, "suffer me, in my own justification, so lemnly to assert, that whatever , and may have opened to my view, t ut know-

through which I have gained the prospect deeply wounds my heart. If your's is not a willing gift, I must be more wretched in the possession than the privation, and my anxiety to obtain it from your free confession shall influence every look and every thought, and guardedly preserve you from the recollection of this most painful interview."——

She withdrew her hand from him in silence, and left the room.

"My dear son," cried the Doctor, "Olivia is very angry with us both, and yoyet I never was so happy in all my crlife."

and th

might ha Sir!---she will not be convinced

of my extenuation:---she must, I fear, despise me!"——

"I shall never be afraid again," exclaimed the old man, joyfully;---"there was no time to be lost, I can tell you; and had I left her a subterfuge, her integrity would have seized it to preserve her own conscience from discovering this important secret.---Dear Charles---you are a soldier; but I am a *General*."

The heart of Belnard was too much oppressed for rejoicing, and his happiness was damped by a feeling that resembled disappointment: a restless anxiety pervaded his frame, and his ideas were too complicated and even too painful to be developed. The Doctor saw it, and could well explain the source; but know-

ing that solitude was the best remedy to restore his composure, and enable him to arrange his thoughts, he affectionately advised him to retire to his lodgings, and dismissed him with the ardent blessings of an overflowing heart.

CHAP. III.

AN ACCIDENT.

ON a calm review of the scene which had so lately occurred, Belnard was not permitted to doubt the certainty of being beloved by Olivia; and though deeply mortified by the manner in which the confession was extorted, he yet hoped that time would convince her how truly her delicacy would by him be guarded from all future shocks. Whatever exultation his own heart might acknowledge, in the possession of her partiality, his manner, he resolved, should betray no

other sentiment than respect, or no assiduity but that of distant politeness, until she should be at liberty to listen to his public addresses; but the attentions he thus considered necessary to withhold from her, he also determined to withhold from all others. To aim at exciting her jealousy, would, he well knew, only incur her contempt, and he foresaw that his greatest security of her heart was by strictly confining his actions to that conduct which might obtain her approbation.

Next morning he delayed going to the Lodge till the hour in which Dr. Estlake usually went an airing. The chaise he found already at the door, and on entering the hall, he met his old friend prepared for his jaunt. Apprehensive by

this incident that he had detained him, he offered an apology, which the good Doctor cheerfully accepted; adding jocosely, that he found himself so well, he had resolved to turn beau, and instead of a male companion, had petitioned for the company of a lady. The appearance of Olivia, hastily descending the stairs, explained to Belnard who was to occupy his place. He bowed to her distantly, and not without confusion, but Walheim in the instant, advancing familiarly to conduct her to the carriage, he could not endure thus tacitly to admit a rival, and stepped forward to share in the honour of assisting her.

"Avaunt!" cried the Doctor, sportively. "The lady has declared in my favour:—both hands are mine."

"Then to you, Sir, I resign them," answered Waltheim, bowing with an air of light gallantry.

The Doctor turned on him a glance of impatient contempt, which Olivia's own confusion prevented her observing. To escape all farther dialogue she hastily stepped into the chaise, and her companion following, they drove from the door.

Belnard stood some minutes on the steps, and his groom happening to cross the court he ordered his horses; he then turned into the house to pay his morning compliments, and found in the breakfast parlour Sophia, and Miss Cardinal, both in earnest conversation, in which Waltheim had joined them. On the Colonel's

entrance it ceased, but he soon took up the newspaper, and they again resumed it in a very low tone.

"But don't you know," said Miss Cardinal, "you must tell us at last?---you have long ago invited us, and we ought to make some preparations as well as the bride."

"Yes," he replied; "but your's can soon be made, and she desired me not to speak of it."

"We will not let her know a word that you say to us," cried Sophia.

"Indeed," returned Waltheim, "I dare not tell."——

"You will be finely henpecked," observed Miss Cardinal; "that is my comfort."——

He vehemently swore he would not; that no woman in England should govern him after marriage, but that a little indulgence was expected before.

"I will tell her what you say," cried Miss Cardinal; "and find out from herself all about it."

"For heaven's sake!" exclaimed Waltheim, "don't speak a word to her on the subject---she will be offended that I mentioned it at all."

"Then tell us," said Sophia, "and we won't let her suspect a syllable of what we know."

"Unless you do," rejoined Miss Cardinal, "I will make a fine story of your blabbing, the minute she comes home; and her sister also shall hear it."

Waltheim entreated, but she became more obstinate, and on their assurances of secrecy and discretion, he confessed that the day was fixed at the distance of a fortnight, at which period, Mrs. Vere would be dead three months, and that Olivia's sudden resolution of going to London the following day, was, he concluded, to make some purchases for the occasion.

"O dear!" cried Sophia, "I wish she would take me with her!"—

"I entreat you not to ask her," said

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Waltheim; "she has refused to take any one but Marcella."

After some farther altercation, which was evidently for the purpose of annoying Waltheim, he moved to a distance to escape them; Belnard, though apparently engaged with the paper, did not lose a sentence of the conversation, and still bent his head over it till he felt his complexion return. His servant then opportunely entered to inform him the horses waited, and he stood up to go.

"Will you let me accompany you?" said Waltheim hesitatingly, "I have something particular to say."

"I am too stupid now to listen;" said the Colonel; "my head achs intolerably."

Waltheim looked humbled and disappointed, and Belnard eager to escape further solicitation, left the room.

That the subject of Waltheim's intended communication, related not only to Olivia, but to the actual selection of the day appointed for her marriage with him, Belnard had no room to doubt. Her inflexibility in the perseverance of duty he with terror reflected, might yet urge her to the performance of even an extorted promise, and the dying request of a mother, had too much influence to be slighted: but to prevent an union productive of certain misery, Belnard was at all risques determined; and he regretted having declined the opportunity Waltheim had offered of conversing freely on a circumstance, of which he now more

than ever felt the necessity of being fully informed.

In this interval of deep musing, his horse proceeded at pleasure, and still leisurely moved forward as if apprehensive of disturbing the thoughts of his rider, by a too hasty step; but a croud in the road, obliged him to leave the direct path, and Belnard stopped to enquire the cause.

One of the group answered, that the horses of a gentleman's carriage had been frightened by the barking of farmer Field's great dog, and had thrown the driver, who was lying half senseless in the cottage he pointed to.

"And where is the carriage?" demand-

ed Belnard, looking round him in surprise.

"A dozen miles off by this time," replied the fellow, coolly, "unless somebody has stopped the cattle; the boys are gone to see which way they went."

Belnard felt alarmed, and was making some farther enquiries, when his groom, who had alighted to see the man who had suffered by the accident, hastily returned from the cottage; his face pale and expressive of fright.

"What would you say?" exclaimed his master.

"It is James, Sir—Doctor Estlake is ——"

Belnard heard no more; he became half frantic with terror, and catching the collar of the man who had spoken to him, as he stooped from his horse, he demanded where was the carriage gone to?

His eye-balls starting, and his features drawn with frightful distortion, excited the greatest amazement!—None could conjecture the cause, or none were capable of answering, till a boy, who in the instant came running towards them, proclaimed, that both the horses was killed against Squire Arnault's gate, and the lady and gentleman were lying dead in the chaise.

Half this sentence was enough, though Belnard heard the whole—his horse felt the spurs, and flew like an arrow. He

almost instantly reached the gate of Arnault Hill, and beheld both the horses, and both lifeless. The chaise was however empty, and without interrogating those who surrounded the animals, he rushed through the side door; swiftly gained the house, and throwing himself from his saddle, entered the porch.

In that moment a door opened—he darted towards it, and caught the arm of the person coming out, who faintly shrieked—it was Miss Arnault.

"What is this for, Sir?" demanded her father, who immediately followed her.

"Tell me," said Belnard, "what has happened?—I will know the worst."

"Young man," replied the dignitary; "cease this degrading impetuosity, which I so little expected from you—your friend is unhurt—the lady only."—

Belnard fell against the wall for support.

"O heavens," exclaimed Miss Arnault, "you have terrified him, Sir, to death—he will expire."—

"Recollect yourself, Colonel Belnard," said Mr. Arnault; "recover your elasticity of intellect."

"I will see her at all hazards," he calmly returned.

"No;" cried Miss Arnault, I beseech

you Colonel, go not there! surgeon Medforth is setting her arm."

"She is not then dead?" he exclaimed, and transport dashed from his lips the cup of despair. He clasped his hands in the eagerness of joy, and burst into the room which Mr. Arnault and his daughter had just left.

Olivia was seated on a chair, the surgeon held her arm, and a footman supported her, while a woman servant stood beside to give assistance.

"A little resolution, Madam," said the surgeon.

"I am not afraid," she replied; "only be quick."

Belnard stepped forward, and roughly pushed the man from his place. Olivia turned her head; traces of Blood on her temple increased the haggard appearance of her pale features, but a gleam of pleasure for a moment, chased from her countenance, the expression of pain, and she faintly exclaimed her surprise.

"You are frightned," she added; "pray don't be so terrified! your friend is well."

"And you, Olivia?"——

"Am less hurt than you," she replied; "be composed I entreat."——

"The Lady, Sir, is a heroine," said surgeon Medforth,"--- "and if you can be firm enough to keep her steady, this dislocation shall soon be set to rights."

"I will be firm," he replied, and placed himself in the chair which the servant had occupied.

"Now, Madam," rejoined the surgeon, "turn your head; the pain is but momentary."——

She obeyed, looked full in Belnard's face; her own in the instant, expressed the most passionate tenderness, and suddenly concealing her emotions in his bosom, she resolutely pronounced that she was prepared.

The surgeon drew her wrist so powerfully, that it returned into the socket with a crash.

"It is over!" he exclaimed.

Olivia made an effort to move her head, but could only turn it half round, and the groan which she had suppressed now escaped.

"Bathe her temples cautiously," said the surgeon, as he bound up her wrist; "give her hartshorn to smell to---she has probably fainted.

Though wound up to an excess of agony himself, Belnard continued firmly to support her---one arm encircled her waist, and with the other he endeavoured to assist in obeying the surgeon's directions; her head still pressed on his bosom, and he gazed at her with the most evident emotions of terror, and unutterable affection. Olivia, however, incapable of speaking, seemed to recollect what he

might suffer, and raised her eyes to his face.

" She lives !" he exclaimed—" she will, she will be preserved to me !"

" Doubt it not, my dear Sir," said surgeon Medforth ; " a few days quietness will restore her."

The agitated lover could not reply ; he pressed his pale and quivering lips to her cheek, and silently offered to heaven his gratitude.

A heavy-drawn sigh burst from her bosom---" be calm" she faintly uttered ; " indeed I am better!"

The wound over her temple, now called

for the attention of the surgeon. He separated the luxuriant tresses, and Belnard perceived that he changed colour: a moment, however ended the suspense. "I give you joy, Sir," he cried; "the tenth part of an inch more, and no human skill could have saved her:—as it is, there is no danger, but she must be kept perfectly free from emotion." The look which accompanied this hint, obliged Belnard to suppress his own sensations, as all the throbbings of his breast must be known to Olivia.

The woman servant was now dispatched to see if a bed-room was prepared for the patient, and the surgeon said he would himself go and inform Doctor Estlake, that no apprehensions could now be entertained for the safety of his fair com-

panion in danger. "I cannot wonder," he added, "at the old gentleman's excessive anxiety about you; your presence of mind not only saved his life but probably your own."

"I owed it to him," she sighingly replied---"pray relieve his fears."

"Belnard!" she then resumed, in a voice which though broken by weakness, yet evinced collected memory, "I know that you have seen my heart! I cannot now command its feelings, but I believe that you respect my principles."

"Respect? O Olivia!——I venerate them."

"Then act accordingly;" she returned; "I think you capable of exertion."

"Olivia!" said he; "I will convince you by my conduct, that I am not unworthy the election of your heart: your delicacy and my own honor shall equally be guarded."

"Enough---enough"---she interrupted ---"I am not yet free;---I had resolved, when myself undeceived---that Waltheim should also——"

"Dearest Olivia," cried Belnard, "say no more---you are exhausted---Waltheim has generosity;---he will liberate you at your *own* request;---be satisfied, that till your recovery I will be passive."

"And Marcella?"

"For her also I promise---I will bring

her to attend you---the subject shall not be mentioned by either to the other."——

"Thank you, my friend;" she falteringly replied---"you do not disappoint me."——

A long silence ensued, and Belnard began to wonder at the delayed return of surgeon Medforth, when he appeared, followed by Miss Arnault.

"Come, come;" said he; "no congratulations; we shall all do very well, and the first step towards it is to remove this lady to her apartment.---Do not disturb yourself," he added, seeing Olivia's endeavours to move her head: "if the Colonel has strength and inclination still

to support you, we may raise your chair between us."

This was easily done, and they carried her up stairs with much less risque than was apprehended. She assured Belnard that she felt comparatively quite at ease, and when he consigned her to the really affectionate cares of Miss Arnault, and the female servants, she smiled at him with an expression that banished half his anxieties, and assured him of the completion of his hopes.

Relieved thus from such a weight of various apprehensions for one object so infinitely dear to him, the heart of Belnard severely accused him of ingratitude in carelessly forgetting another, who

ought to be considered as no less estimable. He enquired which was the Doctor's apartment, and would have gone to it instantly, but the surgeon drew him into the parlour, and his manner awakened the utmost alarm. The Colonel insisted on knowing the truth, and heard, with the most poignant grief, that his excellent old friend, on seeing Olivia's sufferings, had apparently fainted, and was carried to a chamber contiguous to the room in which he had nearly fallen. She refused to have her arm set till he was recovered to sense, and the surgeon knowing the danger of losing time, deceived her into a belief that he had revived. The truth was, however, too fearful to inform her of---his escaping injury from the accident he owed to her:—when the cattle took fright she threw herself before him,

and by setting her arm firmly against the front pannel, preserved him from the shock of the recoil when the horses in heat of blood rushed against the gate. This effort of recollection was also beneficial to her, by keeping her steady; but the Doctor only remembered that she had saved him, and his agony at seeing her nearly lifeless, and evidently much hurt, proved too great for his constitution; he lost his senses, and surgeon Medforth instantly saw it was by a paralytic stroke. He, however, solemnly assured Colonel Belnard that it as yet had nothing to excite fears for his life, and such remedies had already been taken as he hoped might cause an alteration for the better in the course of a few hours.

"You must be patient my dear Co-

lonel," he cried, "and ought to think yourself happy in the escape of a life which I easily perceived interested you in no common degree: but I venture to suggest to you how necessary to arrange measures for the proper attendance of the patients, by placing persons about them to whom they have been accustomed. It is, however, first requisite that we obtain Mr. Arnault's concurrence, and as you probably do not desire an interview so awefully ceremonious, I will undertake the task, if you promise to remain here till my return."

His absence was not long. He reappeared with an open letter in his hand.

"This is a strange man," said he; he

has sent a written invitation to dinner to Mrs. Crank, her daughter, and guests, and has taken a regular copy of it here. He requests also your company, and has required the same favour of me."

"Strange indeed," cried Belnard, "and unfeeling."

"Perhaps so," returned the surgeon; but, after all, I think it was the best method of preventing them being terrified. They cannot suppose an accident very bad that would produce so little anxiety as this evinces, and if you can supersede the spurious intelligence which in these cases ever swiftly flies, all may go on smoothly and well."

He then informed him further, that

Mr. Arnault intended to invite Mrs. Crank to remain with her brother; and Miss Vere's sister was to be as ceremoniously included in this kindness. The former had a chamber allotted to her, the latter would be permitted to remain in Olivia's, which, considering the deviation in established etiquette, was no trifling condescension on the part of the host. The surgeon had also obtained permission for Doctor Estlake's own servant to attend him, and had made such other regulations as he believed most convenient to all parties, and soothing to the foibles of the grand master.

Belnard, surprised and displeased that he was not included in the number of inmates, could yet offer no objection to the general plan. The surgeon hinted,

however, that from a report once circulated respecting him and Miss Arnault he could not think the precaution more singular than many of the other arrangements, and the Colonel submitted, and instantly set out for the Lodge to make the painful communication.

Mrs. Crank and Sophia were gone to an auction, attended by Waltheim; Marcella was in her own apartment, and the servants had not yet sufficiently satisfied their curiosity from Mr. Arnault's messenger to leave him that they might spread the intelligence. She had consequently escaped all vague reports, and he was enabled gradually to unfold the detail: her fears and terror were proportioned to the affection she entertained for her sister, but the Colonel's assu-

rances of safety she could not doubt, as she well knew his feelings could not be slightly affected; and as he had immediately, on reaching the Lodge, sent to Windsor for a chaise, Marcella's impatience to see her sister encountered no delay. Colonel Belnard left a short letter for Mrs. Crank, informing her, in the most softened terms, of the accident, and the subsequent arrangements, and he and his fair companion were quickly on their way to Arnault Hill.

Happily no additional disturbance had occurred to excite Mr. Arnault's jealousy for the dignity of his unsullied respectability. Surgeon Medforth, a man of sound sense and cheerful temper, had conversed with him in terms that proved very effectual to the purpose intended,

and when Miss Marcella Vere's arrival was announced he issued from his library to receive her, with a degree of state which her impatience could very ill support; she took no pains to conceal her anxiety to pass by all fatiguing parade, but her manner was calculated to impress that she committed no ignorant breach of his exacted decorum, and he forgot to take offence where he perceived no chance of aggrandizing his dignity, by obtaining the humility of a concession.

Miss Arnault, in this moment, fortunately descended from Olivia's apartment with the blissful intelligence that she had fallen asleep, and surgeon Medforth affirmed, that Doctor Estlake, in not yet changing for the worse, promised amendment. Belnard would not, how-

ever, now be prevented performing the necessary attentions of respect and affection; and Marcella, who had returned Miss Arnault's salute with the utmost freedom and complacency, went with her to the chamber of Olivia, who, they had agreed should be cautiously informed of her arrival before she appeared in her sight.

During the short drive from the Lodge Colonel Belnard had informed Marcella of what had passed, and declared his resolution to perform the promise he had made to Olivia; the subject was therefore not pursued, but they were sufficiently calmed from their terrors to observe the devastation committed by the unruly animals who still lay lifeless before the gate, through the iron bars of which they

had nearly burst their way. This gate terminated a private road which led only to Arnault Hill, and they easily conjectured that the horses might have been turned into it by some accidental cause, and either had no power to stop their velocity, or had seen nothing to impede their progress. They were dreadfully wounded by the force of the shock: the two back braces of the chaise were snapped in the recoil, and one of the persons who had seen the accident, reported to the Colonel and his companion, as they alighted to walk through, that the situation of the gentleman and lady was extremely dangerous, and that it was wonderful they had escaped so well, as all the glasses were smashed, and the vehicle fallen nearly to the ground.

Marcella, though she shuddered at this description, viewed it only as an evil passed, as the injury Olivia had sustained had effectually warded off a blow which she dreaded for her more than death. The resolution she had formed of marrying Waltheim so immediately awakened all her sister's anxieties to retard and finally prevent an union so inauspicious: she had therefore confided these fears and wishes to Doctor Estlake, who saw that a definite measure must be pursued. It was in consequence of this opinion that he had drawn Olivia into the conversation which had also changed her views, and she had announced her intention of going the day following to London, where she could have leisure to reflect on the conduct necessary to be adopted.

The drawn features and changed colour of Doctor Estlake were bad affirmatives to surgeon Medforth's assurances of at least a chance of the alarming attack ending favourably. — Colonel Belnard contemplated the devastation of a few hours with the most agonizing solicitude, and watched for the predicted alteration with fearful anxiety. The profound silence that reigned around was not interrupted by even the breath of the patient, which could with difficulty be heard; but the surgeon, when he occasionally visited the room, continued to persist in his first opinion, and Belnard was induced to hope that the suspense would be happily terminated in the course of the evening.

A little before the stated hour of dinner in this mansion of regularity, Maddox

arrived from the Lodge. Some directions which the Colonel had given him detained him thus long, and Mrs. Crank had not returned previous to his coming away. He sent to the house where the auction was held, but she had left it, and the messenger went then to Lady Senegal's, where he learned that she was gone in her ladyship's barouche, with a large party, to drive round the park. Expecting, therefore, that she might not hear of Mr. Arnault's invitation till it was too late to accept it, Belnard sent by surgeon Medforth an account of the circumstance, as the best apology for what might afterwards ensue.

This precaution was not unnecessary; dinner was announced, and whatever might have been Belnard's inclination to

obey the summons, the imprudence of a refusal was obvious. Marcella was not influenced by his apprehensions; she declined leaving her sister, and Miss Arnault presented for her such an apology as satisfied the inflexible president, and evinced to Belnard that it was dictated only by the person who gave it: but he easily deduced from the general conversation, that this very excellent girl was entirely pleased with her guest, and he drew from it the satisfactory conclusion, that Marcella had been pleased with her, as she expressed her approbation rather with the warmth of affection than the acquiescence of politeness.

But this frigid repast was not destined to pass without interruption; before it was half over the rapid footsteps of a horse were heard over the pavement, and

immediately the parlour door was suddenly opened by—Waltheim.

Miss Arnault shrieked and covered her face with her hands; her father started up in visible indignation, and Belnard experienced a confusion which he could not account for; but surgeon Medforth who was at all times self-collected took the agitated intruder by the arm, and led him out of the room. The rapid and vivid feelings which on every occasion shot through the frame of Waltheim, with irresistible impetuosity, were most painfully depicted on his countenance and evidently deprived him of speech; but Mr. Arnault saw only the insult committed against himself and his daughter, by the re-appearance of a person who had once incurred his heaviest resentment:

the emotions which he now vainly endeavoured to keep down very plainly denoted that his resentment was not forgotten, and Belnard as much feared adding to the perturbation he beheld by leaving the room as he dreaded encountering Waltheim in his present state of mind, and hearing expressions which he could not now submit to think ought to be uttered by any but himself.

"We have suffered but too much incommodation from this incensor," said Mr. Arnault. "We will resume OURSELVES.

The grave dignity with which this was uttered, and the air of importance that sat on his features must in any other moment have excited Belnard's laughter;

but in the present disposition of his spirits he felt for his consequential host, only contempt; and he with difficulty forbore evincing it by leaving the room, though out of it he must encounter what was yet more disagreeable: the ceremonials of the table were again returned to, and Mr. Arnault's wish to persuade himself that he could not be ruffled by such a man as Waltheim, assisted in restoring his composure. His daughter too, experienced something of the same influence, but a carriage rolled by the window to the porch, and tranquility was again destroyed.

"This is intolerant," cried Mr. Arnault, "decorum should have suggested the prorogation of this visit, till the evening tea."

"Mrs. Crank is, naturally, impatient to see her brother," said Colonel Belnard; "you will give me leave to receive her?"

"Assuredly, Colonel," he replied, pleased at the reference—"to the drawing-room, Samuel," he added to the servant who opened the parlour door—"Miss Arnault will wait on Mrs. Crank immediately."

Belnard was already in the Hall, and already Mrs. Crank had alighted from the barouche, and was followed not only by her daughter, but also by Lady Senegal; the agitation of the first was excessive;—the solicitude of the last not inferior, who enquired for the fate of the Doctor, and expected to see—Miss Arnault, about

whom she had heard so much. The statement of the Doctor's situation, encreased his sister's grief; she was certain he would never recover—she knew this would happen——

Belnard in surprise repeated her words.

"Yes, yes;" she exclaimed, weeping bitterly. "I knew there was something unlucky about them strangers—as if they had fallen from the sky."

The Colonel looked in amazement at each of the ladies; Lady Senegal smiled sarcastically and glanced at Mrs. Crank; but he also observed that she pulled her by the sleeve to hint the necessity of forbearance.

"If you wish to see your brother, Madam," said he——

"Wish?" she interrupted in a rage—"didn't I come for the purpose?—Where is his chamber?"——

"Belnard knew his old friend could not be disturbed, and led the way to his apartment which was on the same floor with the parlour and drawing-room. Miss Arnault met them in the Hall, and Mrs. Crank being too much disturbed to receive her salutations, she proceeded to offer them to Lady Senegal and Sophia.

The scene that followed in the sick chamber was truly terrific! Belnard had always believed Mrs. Crank violent, but

till now he had never witnessed any thing so violent. She wrung her hands and bewailed with a degree of vociferation, that shocked and disgusted him, though he endeavoured to sooth or intimidate her into moderation without effect, till surgeon Medforth fortunately entered the room.

"What is all this for?" said he, in an angry and authoritative voice; "this outrage is absolutely indecent."

"Indecent!" she repeated, starting into fury.

"Yes, Madam," he replied, drawing her forcibly from the bedside; "your brother's countenance is changing."

"For death?" interrupted she with terror.

"No, Madam," but for life;---if he should hear the least disturbance on recovering sensation, the consequence must be fatal."

"I will be quiet;" said Mrs. Crank, in a whisper---"I thought he would never recover."

"You must give me leave to think, as well as to act, on this occasion," said surgeon Medforth; "if you remain quietly, Madam, you are the most proper person to attend your brother; if you do not, Mr. Arnault will adopt some step that you may find extremely unpleasant." "Hush," he added---making a sigh of silence---"he moves."

The Doctor in the instant breathed strongly, and evinced signs of motion.

"We may hope his recovery now," said surgeon Medforth, speaking very low; "but without great caution to prevent the least disturbance, no remedy can avail."

Mrs. Crank became at once submissive. She promised all he required, and tranquillity was restored. For some time they anxiously watched by the patient, but finding he continued perfectly quiet, the surgeon left the room, making a sign to Belnard, who followed him into the parlour.

"As you are a sensible man, Colonel," said he, "I make no apology for doing you a good office; though if the contrary has happened, I sincerely regret it. This Mr. Arnault is not an ill-natured man, but

he is terribly inconvenient, and gives himself and every body about him a vast deal of unnecessary trouble. I have happily restored order however to all parties, and since it is your friends fate thus to be thrown on his hospitality, for their sakes he must be indulged in his whims."

"I at least, would be much to blame," said Belnard; "if I hesitated to indulge them, and I consider myself much indebted to you for the part you have taken."

"My intentions were certainly good, Colonel, and I happily succeeded in hinting to the lady who accompanied Mrs. Crank, the disposition of the man on whom so much now depends. She seemed to understand me perfectly, and returned

to her carriage, leaving her compliments with Miss Arnault for her father. So far all was right, and he is entirely satisfied, as his veneration for rank induces him to suppose that those who possess a title, must understand what is due to dignity; but I much fear my interference with the gentleman who first appeared, has betrayed me into an indiscretion."

"How?" exclaimed Belnard, starting.

"He was quite incoherent in his enquiries about Miss Vere, and his anxiety really, I believe, deprived him of his recollection. I was tormented by his impetuosity, and yet more vexed when he roundly affirmed that she was his affianced wife."

"And what,—did you reply?" quickly demanded Belnard.

"That I rather believed she was intended to be your's—for your anxiety about her, though more manly, was not less ardent.——Dear Colonel—surely it was the fact?"—

"It was—it was," exclaimed Belnard; "but for worlds"—he hesitated, and starting up, walked up and down the room.

"I thought it the wisest plan, Colonel," resumed surgeon Medforth, "since I had been so officious, to go still farther and inform you of the truth, that you might take measures accordingly. The gentleman was evidently much enraged, and left this, I fear with a hostile intention.

"I wish he may," cried Belnard.—— "His resentment alone, can heal the wound I have inflicted on myself."

Surgeon Medforth perceived that this circumstance was more intricate than it appeared, and forbore any questions which could add to the Colonel's uneasiness. He merely expressed his concern for having occasioned it, and offered any mediation in his power, if the affair should require a friendly interference.

"I must think of what is to be done;" replied Belnard. "I am so delicately situated, my dear Sir, that to explain why I am thus agitated is impossible. Waltheim himself, must be the first informed of the cause, but no provocation on his side, shall induce me to meet him otherwise than amicably."

"I wish Colonel I could have commanded my own temper as well,"—— said the surgeon, "it might have saved you the trouble of managing your's."

"Ultimately, perhaps not—it has only hastened an explanation which must eventually take place. When I think myself at liberty, Medforth, to speak, I will for my own sake, inform you of my justification; in the mean time I request your silence?"

"Inviolably," returned the surgeon.

The conversation here ended, and the evening passed without any new disturbance. Doctor Estlake continued evidently to mend; he made several efforts to speak, and seemed to know those about

him, particularly Belnard whose hand he retained a considerable time, and appeared unwilling to lose sight of him. This determined his young favourite, (at all risques of displeasing Mr. Arnault,) to remain in the Doctor's chamber during the night, and surgeon Medforth, who saw the necessity of this measure to his patient, easily settled the affair, by pretending that it was by his orders the Colonel intruded. Mr. Arnault, who, since Lady Senegal's message, had entirely recovered his composure, willingly granted his accordance, and when the friendly surgeon took leave for the night, he left both his patients in the most favourable state he could expect, and the inhabitants of the whole house, returned to that grave formality, which extremely well suited its present guests.

CHAP. IV.

A CHALLENGE.

THE precaution thus adopted by Colonel Belnard, in remaining with his old friend, proved extremely necessary. Towards morning the Doctor spoke, but so thickly and unintelligible, that Belnard could only distinguish the name of Olivia, and instantly satisfied him of her safety. Tears of joy at this happy certainty were convincing proofs that his intellects were restored, and a tranquil sleep succeeding, promised the fairest hopes of his recovery.

When surgeon Medforth at an early hour

the next morning paid his visit, he confirmed these hopes by a decided opinion, that the attack had been too slight to cause serious alarm, and was now almost entirely gone off; but the advanced age of the patient, rendered him subject to relapse, and he recommended to Mrs. Crank a continuance of her present cares. Olivia he found not so well; she had passed the night without sleep, and was very feverish. This he however expected as the natural result of the pain she had suffered, and assured Belnard that nothing serious could be apprehended, from a circumstance which it could not be supposed she would escape.

The Colonel had come from the Doctor's chamber to hear this intelligence, and now stood on the steps of the Porch, talk-

ing to surgeon Medforth as he mounted his horse. He requested him earnestly again to visit his patients in a few hours, that if additional advice were necessary for either, it might immediately be sent for, and he received some consolation from the surgeon's assurances, that it would not only be superfluous, but prejudicial, as it must excite their suspicions of their own safety.

He then took his leave, and Belnard feeling himself refreshed by breathing the air, which in the mornings of October, is usually so clear and exhilerating, put on his hat and descended the steps, with the intention of strolling round the lawn, when he perceived that the side gate in opening to let the surgeon pass out, admitted a gentleman on horseback to pass

in, and on his nearer approach, he discovered it to be—Dimple.

His appearance not at all surprised the Colonel, who easily guessed his purpose; but he had already formed his resolution, and was therefore perfectly unembarrassed. He yielded to him the common salute, and answered his very particular enquiries with general carelessness; but Dimple was too well accustomed to this sort of treatment to feel offended, and committing his horse to the care of the gate-keeper he walked beside the Colonel, who still led away from the house.

At length, after much hesitation, and with great circumlocution, Dimple opened his embassy. Waltheim had been informed by undoubted authority, that

Colonel Belnard, taking advantage of the opportunity afforded him by accident of assisting Miss Vere, had publicly avowed his intention of rivaling his friend, and that friend desired to meet him at whatever place and time he might think fit to appoint.

"You deliver your message with great temper, Mr. Dimple," said Belnard; "pray, may I ask, did Mr. Waltheim confide it to you as coolly?"

"To confess a truth, Colonel, he did not. He gave it to me yesterday, with a charge to come here last night, but I was so particularly engaged I was obliged to defer it till this morning, and I knew it would be all the same thing."

"And don't you think you might have so managed as to prevent him sending it at all?"

"No;—impossible.—I tried every argument to no purpose."

"Then I suppose I must comply?"

"Faith, Colonel, you know best;—but if you wish me to speak to him on the subject before it is settled——"

"What good would that do?"

"Prevent the meeting, perhaps."

"That would be out of course, I fancy."

"Yes—certainly:—but as you wish it——"

"Pardon me?" said Belnard; "I do not wish it. I will certainly meet Mr. Waltheim this day week—at this hour."——

"And where, Colonel?"——

"In the Doctor's study, at Estlake Lodge."

"The study? won't that be a bad place?"

"*I* think it the best place, Sir."

"It is very convenient at all events,"

said Dimple;—"Do you choose to name your second, or your weapons, now?"

"No:—you have my answer."

"Shall I take it to him before breakfast?" said Dimple, looking wistfully at the house.

"Certainly."

"Well, Colonel, good bye! this fighting is a d—n'd unpleasant thing."——

"To men of your disposition," returned the Colonel, "it generally is so."

"He, he, he;" laughed Dimple; "you are in a quizzing humour this morning, my dear Colonel. Adieu."

Belnard passed the whole of this day, except in the times of breakfast and dinner, (to both of which he received regular invitations) in the Doctor's apartment. The good old man continued to get better, but his strength had evidently received a great shock; and while his sister felicitated herself on his rapid recovery, the Colonel felt something rise to his throat which choaked his utterance. Surgeon Medforth, however, assured him that all immediate danger was over, and compelled by various circumstances, he reluctantly consented to leave him at a late hour that night.

On reaching his lodgings he learned that Waltheim had remained in bed the whole day; but, about two hours before, a gentleman had called and made him

rise and dress for a ball at Windsor. Glad to avoid a meeting before the time appointed, Belnard retired to rest, having ordered his horses to call for him at an early hour the next morning.

At seven o'clock accordingly his servant entered his chamber;—he told him that the horses waited, and that Mr. Waltheim had been, since four o'clock, walking up and down the drawing-room in expectation of seeing him.

To escape was now impossible; he dressed, and, with the coolest determination, walked down stairs. Waltheim hearing his footstep, stood at the door on the stairs head, and with vehement gestures, voice, and countenance, insisted on speaking to him.

"Now, Waltheim," said the Colonel, "it is useless to interrupt me—I have nothing to say till the time appointed."

"The present time is the best;" reiterated the enraged Waltheim.

"I am inflexible;" returned Belnard.

"Then you acknowledge your crime!"

"Adieu!"—he replied, going.

Waltheim even furiously detained him—and swore they should not so soon part.

"You are not master of yourself," said Belnard; "by the appointed time you will; I shall then meet you on equal

terms; before I will not be induced or provoked to it."

"How triumphantly do you carry it," exclaimed Waltheim—"Olivia, I see, has authorized this insult."

"Waltheim," said Belnard, "you wrong both her and me: were she capable of a deviation, I could not:—but adieu!"

"Finish your sentence, Sir!"

"Not now."——

He forcibly broke from him, and mounting his horse, rode by a very considerable circuit to Arnault Hill.

His temper flurried, and his heart inexpressively pained by Waltheim's impetuous attack, he was too little prepared for the intelligence that awaited him. The Doctor continued to amend; but Olivia had a great access of fever, and though the surgeon assured him it was only what he expected, Belnard's imagination portrayed the most terrifying images. Impressed, however, with the necessity of concealing his emotions before his old friend, he was compelled to suffer his misery with a cheerful countenance.

The four succeeding days were to Belnard days of anguish, rendered yet more poignant by the necessity of suppressing it. Olivia's fever had encreased fearfully; she knew none of those who ap-

proached her but Marcella; but she was so far sensible of her situation as to enquire with extreme solicitude if she ever spoke deliriously?—Marcella answered, no; but that if she did no one should remain in the room but herself. The promise satisfied her entirely, and she soon after sunk into a composed sleep, which surgeon Medforth said was critical: it in fact proved so—she awoke much refreshed; and her kind physician, whose interest for her was inexpressibly great, pronounced the most positive decision that all danger was over.

Till this moment Doctor Estlake was kept ignorant of her situation, but by the earnestness of his enquiries he seemed to suspect it, and often asked if they did not deceive him? the surgeon therefore

judged it most prudent to inform him of what had really happened, since no more apprehensions could be entertained; and his joy, and gratitude to heaven, appeared infinitely greater than that of his young friend, who, the moment he heard the happy intelligence, flew out of the house and rambled about the little plantations till the old man's self-congratulations had completely subsided.

Thus permitted to breathe again, Belnard's thoughts involuntarily reverted to Waltheim, and as the time approached for the meeting, his anxiety encreased to have it over. Lady Senegal and her sisters had in the interval of Olivia's danger always called once each day on Miss Arnault, and sent repeated enquiries. Mr. Arnault perceived that these visits and

enquiries were conducted with the utmost decorum, and sent his daughter to return the civilities which she had a share in. On this circumstance, however, Belnard had no reflections to throw away, or did he even remember that he had heard of it; and as he had neither accidentally or designedly again encountered Waltheim, he was entirely uninformed of every occurrence that passed without the confines of Arnault Hill.

At length the morning arrived which he half dreaded, and most sincerely wished to be over. From his lodgings he went direct to the Lodge, where he found Waltheim and Dimple already waiting for him: The latter appeared unusually gay:---the former extremely dejected!

"But my dear Colonel," cried the pliant squire to knight errantry——"do you come alone?"

"Yes, Sir!"

"Gad," he returned, with a voice and countenance as nearly approaching that of a bully as he dare—"I hope there won't——I cannot suppose there will be any flinching."

"Do me the favour, Sir," said Belnard, to explain that word?"

"Explain?" he lispingly repeated,—"pon my life, Colonel, you take me at a nonplus; I don't exactly know it myself."

"Then have the goodness," said Belnard, "to walk up and down that path, till Mr. Waltheim and I have a private conversation."

He pointed to the glass door by which this valiant assistant was to go out, and Dimple perceiving that Waltheim intended compliance, he followed so good an example.

Belnard having again specified the walk he was to remain in, shut the door on him, and resumed his seat."

"Waltheim," said he, "I am not come to contend with you; I will not suffer either of us to regret, that he has deprived the other of a life which was given for nobler purposes."

Waltheim was silent, but his features evidently expressed 'more of *sorrow than of anger*.'

"I will not now," resumed the Colonel, "attempt to work upon your feelings, which I hope and believe I might do. My first aim is to vindicate Miss Vere from your reproach, and the next to explain what have been my own feelings."

"After what I have heard," said Waltheim, mournfully, "I cannot doubt that I am the dupe of my own credulity."

"We are both unhappy, my friend;" cried Belnard, "but neither of us are dupes. That I have occasioned un-

easiness to you, whose welfare I ever considered peculiarly my care, fills me indeed with the truest regret."

"O, Charles!" returned Waltheim, "how may I believe this? have you not avoided—shunned me?—refused me the councils which I have lately so much needed; and through the want of which, I plunged into new follies."

"Dear Waltheim," exclaimed Belnard; "how soon can you resume the affections which a heart like your's is so worthy of retaining; listen to the strict relation of what has passed in mine, and judge for me with the candour which was ever your characteristic."

"When I first beheld Olivia, I knew

not that you had ever seen her. The peculiarity of her conduct struck my imagination, and the graces of her person and manner, attracted my heart: for this I am in no light censurable."

"I admit it," said Waltheim, "and cannot but wonder at my own stupidity, that I did not see the whole circumstance from the very first. But accustomed as I have been to rely on you——."

"And you will find, my friend, that I have not forfeited your *good opinion*, at least: hear me out, and then judge for yourself."

He then in a voice which gradually gained strength as he proceeded, circumstantially related every event as it oc-

curred: suppressing only those which might implicate the delicacy or integrity of Olivia. He stated his disappointment at finding her probably engaged, and his regret at the too firm possession she had taken of his heart when he found that her's was Waltheim's: his resolution never to see her again, and how that resolution was broken.

"But assure yourself, Waltheim," he continued, "that though Miss Vere did discover my sentiments, it was by accident. She compelled me to recollect that I had injured you and her by thus reciding myself, and whatever might have been my presumption, I knew her too well to utter it. I must however, so far justify myself as to declare, that so little hope of success had I formed, that my

resolution was fixed to absent myself, till time, and the impossibility of her belonging to any but you, might enable me to overcome the passions that struggled in my soul. Whatever might be my own portion of tranquillity, I was fully determined that your's should never be disturbed, and after the sacrifice I had made of every prospect of happiness in so strongly advising you to prosecute your suit with Olivia, I found little difficulty in forming resolutions which were as necessary to her future peace, as to your's. My public character and my private conscience ensured to you, the strictest performance of the most painful obligations imposed on me by friendship, and I will add, by love, and had it depended only on myself, they certainly would have been fulfilled."

"O my friend," interrupted Waltheim, "say no more.---I see it all---I can guess what a mind like your's must have suffered in the contest; often---very often have I thought to myself how exactly Olivia was calculated to make you happy ---and often I have wished that you might meet with such another."

"Generous!---exalted Waltheim," exclaimed Belnard starting up---"how little do you make me appear in my own eyes."

"No:" he replied, "I do not see that you are to be accused; Olivia I can now remember, was as much struck with your character, and when you first came to the Lodge was eloquent in your praises. She however, soon became quite silent about

you, and I now think I can guess the reason——"

"Waltheim!---Good heaven!"

"I recollect all this now perfectly," he resumed, "and am only surprised at myself---my mind is entirely settled on that head."

"Has Olivia then suffered in your esteem?"

"Far from it---I never saw her character in the exalted light I now see it, and there is certainly one step by which I can make myself worthy of her."——

Belnard felt his strength suddenly

forsake him, and threw himself on a chair.

"This step," resumed Waltheim, "will also ensure to me the recovery of your regard, and the next time we meet, it shall be with far other designs than those which this day brought us together.—Adieu! my friend."——

"What"—exclaimed Belnard, catching his hand, "what have you resolved on?"

"To be the happiest man in the world, my dear friend;—you shall esteem me more than ever."——

"Waltheim! beware of any rashness; hear Olivia on this subject—I assure you

in the most sacred manner, it has never been discussed between us."

"She has done what is right, I am certain," returned Waltheim; "and I am persuaded so have you.—You know that I am restricted from going to Arnault Hill.—I will write to you the explanation of my sentiments.——Adieu."

Belnard's eyes followed him as he hastily left the room, and he continued to sit in mute contemplation till Dimple, who in passing up the walk, always looked in, now seing Waltheim depart, thought it was fit time for him to depart also. He entered, and enquired of the Colonel what was to be done, and receiving only the answer of "nothing, Sir;" he concluded he

might more probably learn particulars from the person whose anxiety was most concerned; and accordingly pursued him. Colonel Belnard immediately after re-mounted his horse, and proceeded slowly to Arnault Hill.

CHAP. V.

AN ELOPEMENT.

A second week elapsed, and the patients continued to amend, as might be expected. The Doctor entirely regained his intellectual powers, though his constitution had evidently suffered permanent injury. Olivia also, by slow degrees appeared recovering, and in the united attention of her sister and Miss Arnault, her mind seemed to resume its former elasticity, and her temper the serenity which ought ever to be the effect of a peaceful conscience.

The contemplation of her character had, indeed, opened to Miss Arnault's view, continual subjects for surprise. Her own feelings had hitherto denied the possibility of enduring bodily pain without murmur, but in Olivia she beheld it borne not only in silence, but with cheerfulness, and while wonder impressed her mind with respect, the amiable and unaffected manners of the sufferer, called forth the most affectionate feelings of her heart. She loved Olivia with even enthusiastic regard, and found in the conversation of Marcella, a train of originallity, which while it amused, was a pretty certain evidence that she belonged to a rank of which she herself had never been a member. The two sisters had easily gathered from even the little boastings of their new friend, that the circle

in which she had moved, was neither very large or very brilliant; she related instances of learning, elegance, and refinement, which being the highest she had ever seen she concluded could not be surpassed; and while she was heard with attention and complacency, her imagination suggested the secret hope that she might also be listened to with an impression of admiration.

Lady Senegal's knowledge of the mystery attending the strangers, had, in an early interview been communicated to Miss Arnault, but it produced an effect very different from that intended; too amiable to suspect others of a conduct she was herself incapable of, she felt a degree of interest for them, that the sincere warmth of her heart rendered even

painful; she would have made any sacrifice to prove the fervency of the new affection that occupied it, and this sentiment pervaded in all her little attentions, and obtained the return it so well merited.

But though nature had formed her intellectually superior to the common level, her education had been too limited to enlarge her understanding; she had caught the pedantry of her father, and in many instances, she had also caught his pride; these produced a decided preference of her own opinions, though in contradiction to all the rest of the world; without being an egotist, she was to the last degree dogmatic, and in the stile of her sentiments, the tone of her voice, the pronunciation of her words, the manner of her attitudes, and the peculi-

arity of her dress, there was a positive evidence that she considered all those who varied from her, as varying from the right. Yet those external distortions were the effect of exaggeration, not of perversion: her native worth and universal excellencies shown through the veil of affectation, and while she shrieked at the sight of a spider, or prayed to heaven for the life of a fly, her feelings were certainly engaged, and those who witnessed them, rather lamented the insignificance of the objects, than condemned the excessive sensations they inspired. In the period of Miss Vere's illness, her attention was unoccupied by trifling considerations, and the noblest emotions of her heart kept in action; but as her guest began to recover, her own mind lost its real spring, and again descended to regard

with importance the most unimportant pursuits.

This retrogression could not, however, deprive her of the esteem she had once obtained. Olivia and Marcella loved her truly, and when in their presence she betrayed her prevalent foibles, the only censure they ever passed when she left them, was, "dear girl! why was she not better instructed?"

Thus rising daily in the esteem and affection of her new friends, and daily impressed with an increased portion of similar sentiments towards them, it was with extreme reluctance she heard that the surgeon had pronounced the safety of their return to Estlake Lodge. The day was fixed for their removal, in the course

of the next week, and she deeply lamented the privation of society that had yielded her both pleasure and improvement.

But this interval enjoyed with so much serenity in the chamber of Olivia, was very differently passed in that of the Doctor. His recovery permitted his sister the liberty of receiving the morning visits which Lady Senegal regularly paid at Arnault Hill, and Colonel Belnard on every repetition, perceived that he had himself been a subject of their private conversation. Mrs. Crank, ever in extremes, had formerly treated him with an excess of attention, of kindness, and confidence, which he did not in truth merit, because he could not return; but her manner now rapidly reversed, and her

anxiety to separate him from his old friend continually betrayed her into an irritation of temper, of which he was evidently the source, and which soon became too violent to conceal from the Doctor himself. His conduct, on this occasion, evinced that he neither approved or intended to indulge her caprice or narrow-minded jealousy; his young friend's influence appeared more established than ever, and Belnard, though infinitely disgusted, soon ceased to consider her except as an attendant necessary to the convenience of the invalid.

Such was the situation of the several parties, when one morning, just after the Doctor had risen and was seated in his great elbow chair, Mrs. Crank was called out to Lady Senegal. The two

friends remained conversing with more than usual spirit a considerable time, when a confusion of voices as if in anger, attracted their notice. Maddox, who in that moment entered, informed them that it was occasioned by his mistress, who was in a passion about Miss Sophia; but he added his supposition, that she must soon be quiet, as Mr. Arnault was called from his library to pacify her.

This account highly amused the Doctor, who advised his young friend to remain where he was, and not volunteer in so unprofitable a war; but Belnard suggested the propriety of taking the fatigue of conquest from Mr. Arnault, and the Doctor assenting, he immediately left the room.

His purpose was, however, prevented;

in crossing the hall, his name was called in low voices, and he saw Miss Arnault and the two Miss Cardinals in the doorway of the parlour, they beckoned to him, and expecting to learn from them the whole disturbance, he readily obeyed the signal.

"For heaven's sake! Colonel," cried Celestina, "do not venture yourself in that room; you will never come out alive."

"It is as bad as the haunted chamber in Blue Beard," added [illegible].

"O dear!" exclaimed Miss Arnault, "how my heart throbs with terror."

After some entreaties to be informed,

without further preface of what was going forward; they contrived to let him understand that the giddy, foolish, ridiculous Sophia, had eloped.

"Eloped!" exclaimed the Colonel—— "with who, pray?"—

"O, as to that," answered Celestina, "we know nothing in the world about her."

"Has she not been with Lady Senegal?" demanded Belnard, in much astonishment.—

"Yes—but you know she was her own mistress, and so very imprudent."—

"It at least appears extraordinary,"

cried the Colonel, incredulously, "that she should so have eluded her companions, as to leave no clue by which you could guess."—

"O, we guess easily enough," said [illegible]—"it is with Mr. Dimple."

"Are your suspicions of him well grounded? Miss F[illegible]," demanded Belnard, penetratingly.

"We suppose so, Colonel," cried her sister, "for he left Windsor two days ago."

"And she was here yesterday?" rejoined the Colonel—"that is a little contradictory."—

"Not at all—Lady Senegal thinks it was only a finesse, and that Dimple inveigled Mr. Waltheim into his scheme." "We only suppose so," she added, perceiving Belnard start.—

"But why should you suppose Waltheim concerned?"

"Because he called on Sophia last night, and said he had been sent in a great hurry by her mother to fetch her, that she might see her uncle before he died."——

This dialogue was interrupted by the drawing-room door suddenly opening; Mrs. Crank, with a countenance of frenzy, issued from it, and vehemently insisted on going to her brother, but

Lady Senegal endeavoured to detain her, while Mr. Arnault finding the waving of his hand unattended to, pushed his way by, and Belnard, who had instantly joined them, positively declared she must not go.

The scene that ensued, was not to be depictured. Mrs. Crank raved almost madly, and accused the Colonel of instigating his friend to assist in the ruin of her daughter; that he all along knew Dimple to be a fortune hunting spendthrift, and encouraged his pretensions with Sophia only to deprive her of her uncle's favour.

Colonel Belnard denied none of these assertions; he merely compelled her to return into the drawing-room, where her

strength being totally exhausted, she abated the violence of her passion in an hysterick burst of tears.

In this interval, the Colonel could feel no surprise at receiving a message from Doctor Estlake; but to leave Mrs. Crank at liberty to follow, was an experiment highly dangerous, and Lady Senegal offering herself to answer the message, Maddox returned to his master to apprize him of her visit. During her absence, Belnard's wishes to restore composure and his pity for the cause, urged him to endeavour by argument and persuasion to ameliorate the vehemence of Mrs. Crank's agitations; but the exclamations of passion were now changed to sulky silence, and seeing she was determined not to answer, he forbore to speak.

At length Lady Senegal re-entered the room, and followed by her sisters and Miss Arnault: the three first looked disappointed, and the latter evidently distressed; but her Ladyship ever accustomed to wear the countenance most suited to her purposes, instantly accommodated her features to her words, and in a tone calculated to impress the belief that she had herself very little reliance on the truth of what she uttered, she assured Mrs. Crank that her brother had been more lenient than could be expected, and a little time and patience must set all to rights.

"Patience!" exclaimed Mrs. Crank; "how can I have patience? but I will see my brother—he shall know the wicked-

ness of those to whom he has given his favour!" and she started up to go to him.

"For heaven's sake," cried Lady Senegal, "think how much worse you will make matters. This is no time to see Doctor Estlake; besides," and she whispered something to her in a very low voice. Mrs. Crank's eyes again shot fire as she turned them on Miss Arnault, who looked conscious of the cause.

"I will not stop another moment," cried the enraged woman; "I see who it is that contrives to have me insulted on every side; but my brother shall hear of it—I will turn the tables he shall find:" "you will give me leave, Sir," she added with an air which she intended for ironi-

cal, "you will permit me to pass to Lady Senegal's carriage, and leave you in possession of the field of conquest."

Apprehensive of yet more provoking her, he dared not offer his assistance; but her Ladyship in receiving it, said, half whisperingly, "did you ever see such a mad woman?—she absolutely terrified Mr. Arnault."

"Does she go to your house?" asked Belnard.

"I hope so," she replied; "poor woman, she has brought on all this distress by indulging that giddy girl in every nonsensical whim.—Adieu Colonel."

Miss Arnault waited his return to the hall, and met him with much embarrass-

ment. She expressed her sorrow that her father had been provoked to say any thing rude, but sincerely hoped that both the offender and offended would forget it.

"My dear Miss Arnault," Belnard returned, kissing her hand; "I am grieved that he has so much to excuse, and thank you for your solicitude."

She blushed and stammered for a reply, and the Colonel anxious to see his old friend, bowed and passed on.

He found the Doctor more thoughtful than agitated, but extremely eager to know the truth of this surprising affair. "My sister, I know," said he, "was once in favour of Sophia's marriage with

Dimple; for though I plainly told her who and what he was, she so frequently endeavoured to turn my opinion, and persuade me that he was an eligible match, that she left me no doubt on the subject of her wishes; and had I not believed that to forbid him my house would but hasten an elopement, I would certainly have done so."

"I acknowledge myself astonished;" said Belnard——"that Dimple should risque her fortune by this method of possessing her hand, is to me inconceivable; but you at least have it in your power to secure to her an independence."——

"A few days will shew what ought to be done," answered the Doctor—"I

hope the girl has been more lucky than wise."

A long silence ensued, in which the Doctor appeared much occupied with his own reflections, and Belnard felt unwilling to speak on a subject that afforded no serious foundation for any apology. At length the old gentleman awoke from his reverie.

"How true is it," he cried, "that cunning people often outwit themselves? Lady Senegal, when most on her guard to day, betrayed that she was acquainted with the affair, and even active in its accomplishments."

"I also thought so," rejoined Belnard.

"That she has some selfish view in it," resumed the Doctor, "is equally certain from her well known character, and from what she said to me. The arguments she selected to soften my resentment, were those which in truth must condemn Sophia, and when I assured her I was not at all angry with the girl, and would still give her the portion I had ever intended, she lost all power of concealing her disappointment, and very seriously advised me to delay publicly declaring this till at least I knew who was the gentleman that participated in the crime."

"Who?"—repeated Belnard—"does she not know it to be Dimple?"

"She wished me to believe she thought so," he replied; "but I perceived from

other sentences of her conversation, that she knows it is not Dimple."

"Then who?—great heaven!—but surely that could not be."——

"Time will tell us," rejoined the Doctor—"the suspense is unpleasant, but I hope it will end for the best."——

Belnard started up, and paced the room.

"I have sometimes," resumed the Doctor, "been tempted to accuse myself of wilful error in the conduct I have lately pursued; but in contemplating the reverse of the picture I stand excused. I am aware that no consideration should tempt us to commit evil that good may come of it,

and if Sophia has married Dimple, I shall begin to fear that such was my predicament, and for ever lament that I encouraged her mother's intimacy with Lady Senegal; through which the girl was introduced to so unworthy and unfortunate an alliance;—but,—I hope she has not married Dimple.——

Belnard's agitation increased, and the entrance of Maddox interrupted the conversation. Soon afterwards he met Mr. Arnault at dinner, and felt much relieved by perceiving that mortified pride kept the lofty gentleman from discussing a subject unpleasant to all parties. Miss Arnault herself, seemed by her silence and embarrassment, to dread it, and as Marcella has hitherto remained in her sister's apartment, there was no-

thing to disturb the thoughts of the trio from the objects visible to their senses.

The unavoidable emotions of this day's incidents had extremely fatigued the Doctor. He therefore retired to rest at an early hour, and Belnard gladly availed himself of the liberty to return to his lodgings for the night.

CHAP. VI.

UNINTERESTING DEVELOPMENT.

THOUGH Colonel Belnard had still continued to inhabit the same house with Waltheim they had not once met since the important explanation. The latter evidently shunned it, and the former felt a consciousness of having committed an injury which could never be remedied to his friend, and the discussion of which could only increase their mutual uneasiness.

But the suspicions which Doctor Est-

lake hinted at, and which were certainly not unfounded, could not be endured without investigation. Belnard enquired of the woman of the house such particulars as might lead to a development of facts, and learned that Miss Crank had called the morning before, and left a note for Mr. Waltheim. The woman surprised at the circumstance, looked after her when she went from the door, and saw her join two ladies, who, from the description, Belnard instantly knew to be the Miss Cardinals. The woman added, that when she gave the letter to Mr. Waltheim, he grew very red, and ran up stairs in a great hurry. Soon after he rang for his servant, to whom he gave orders about packing up some cloaths, and directed him to hire a horse for himself immediately, and proceed by the

cross roads to St. Alban's, where he was to wait till further orders. The man accordingly left Windsor in about an hour, and as she had not seen his master since, she supposed he was gone too; but she knew he must soon be back, as the servant had taken but a small velise with him.

No longer doubting that Miss Cardinal, and of course her sister, were privy to Sophia's conduct, Belnard resolved to ascertain the fullest certainty respecting the confirmation of every suspicion. He understood from Miss Cardinal, that Waltheim had called on Sophia, and taken her from Lady Senegal's, on pretence of seeing her uncle; that she had gone with him was therefore apparent, and through St. Alban's was the most

direct way to the great north road. The assertion that Dimple was the man, he less and less believed, for he knew him too well to suppose he could have other motives to marry than money, and he believed he possessed too little spirit to brave the resentment of Sophia's mother, who certainly now knew his situation and character. That she had ever been deceived in it, was indeed surprising, but Belnard guessed at the source of deception, and thought he traced the progress up to the present moment. To interrogate Lady Senegal, was therefore his next step, and this he resolved to do without delay or circumlocution.

On reaching her house, he learned that she had dined at Estlake Lodge, and was not expected to return till a late hour.

Though surprised and vexed at being obliged to meet her where Mrs. Crank was mistress of the house, he was not intimidated, and immediately proceeded.—

As night had by this time entirely shut in, he was not seen from the windows in crossing the court. He knocked at the door, which was opened by James, who had entirely recovered his share of the terrible accident, and the Colonel sent by him a message to Lady Senegal requesting to see her in the study. He waited nearly half an hour before she appeared, and she had then an air of sarcastic jocularity, which Belnard at once saw was premeditated.

With much temper, but determination,

he instantly led to the questions he wished to be informed of, and in the most pointed terms, insisted on her declaring the whole affair; but her undaunted denial really shook his belief that she knew more than she acknowleged, and she seized the moment of credulity to establish her own innocence.

"For God's sake, Colonel," said she, "do you think I could take the trouble to guide such a girl as Sophia?"

"But as she was in your house, Madam, it was, at least, your duty to prevent her misconduct!"

"Admirably defined!" she answered, laughing maliciously—"it was all owing to one of your Doctor's new favourites.—

Ah, ha, Colonel! you don't like to hear their names I suppose, but it was only Miss Marcella, (not her sister,) who persuaded Sophia that there was truth in fortune telling."

"This, Lady Senegal, is below belief," said Belnard, haughtily.

"I vow to heaven it's a fact—she has been poring over Celestina's fan ever since she thought Dimple had changed his mind."

"Changed his mind," Belnard repeated.——

——"Why—a—yes,"—she returned in confusion; "Dimple did appear cool to her for a few days before he left Windsor,

but that was only to blind us, I am certain—she is certainly gone with him."

"I am sorry, Madam," said he, "to have taken so much of your time—I wish you good night."

"Good Lord!" she impatiently exclaimed; "one would think you don't believe me! sure you know that Sophy to be the giddiest flirt alive?"

"I understood she was particularly your favourite?"

"Pshaw!—her mother told you so—nonsensical stuff."

The Colonel was too much provoked to hear more. He left Lady Senegal in

possession of the study, and returned to his lodgings in the fullest persuasion, that she had herself instigated the folly she was so violent to condemn. What might be the origin of her interference he had no time to consider; the effect of it alone occupied him.

This, indeed, filled him with the most painful astonishment. He knew that Waltheim even in his most inconsiderate moments, was capable of the noblest generosity; he recollected every particular of their last conversation, and saw that the enthusiasm of friendship had suggested a sacrifice which was now completed. To restore Olivia to the liberty of receiving other addresses, Waltheim had bestowed his hand on a woman for whom he had never discovered the least partiality, and the

weaknesses and extravagancies implanted by nature, must, by Sophia's similarity of folly be confirmed, rather than eradicated.

"Let me not!" cried Belnard, in extreme emotion, "let me not remember his father's letter—I dare not confess to myself that I have destroyed the happiness which was given into my care! Can even the possession of Olivia heal the wounds of remorse? O, Waltheim! how irreparably have you injured yourself and me?"

Though now free to indulge hope without a crime, a confused feeling of shame, concern, and wonder, deprived him of almost the faculty of reflection. He paced across the apartment in a hurry

of agitation, and experienced all the vicissitudes of apprehension, regret, and self-accusation.

But ascertained as he was that Lady Senegal in taking an active part, had some design to answer, he could little suppose that to accomplish a purpose altogether improbable, she aimed at the disunion of persons so nearly allied by ties of blood and of gratitude. She knew the debt of obligation due by Mrs. Crank to her brother, and Belnard concluded that her Ladyship providently looked forward to the period when the Doctor's fortune might be divided between a sister and niece, who had already blindly yielded themselves to her guidance, and over whom she had now established an influence which a future period might

turn to excellent account; but in truth, Lady Senegal had not been quite so provident. The opportunity of an interview with the Doctor, she looked upon as a most fortunate event, and in the smoothest terms, she expressed her anxiety that he might forgive an offence, which she subtilely insinuated to be unpardonable.

The deepness of her plan might well indeed, lead her to suppose it must be successful. She had informed herself of the family histories of Doctor Estlake, his sister and niece, and Colonel Belnard; but finding the mysterious story of the strangers, baffled all her genius for discovery, she concluded it must comprise circumstances on which prudence set her seal of secrecy. Her imagination scrupled not to suggest that the Doctor knew

more of them than he acknowledged, and the incidents imputed to chance, she knew the world too well not to attribute to design. The interest excited by these strangers, and the affection evinced towards them by their old friend, was assumed by him to impose on the idiot Waltheim, and when the Doctor's purpose was answered by getting this burthen off his own shoulders, she wisely predicted that the face of affairs must alter.

The progress of a few weeks, however, excited her suspicions, that the old man's regard for his wards was real, and she felt quite at a loss how to proceed. All her spirited exertions, her journey from Southampton, and the immense expense of remaining in Windsor, had produced to her no other benefit than the tormenting

quaintance of Mrs. and Miss Crank. She therefore resolved to grapple at some other reward, and called to mind a very favourite adage of her sister's, that '*continual dropping wears stone!*'

To the Doctor and the Colonel she now looked for consolation, and charged the *girls* to behave cautiously.

Such was the suspension of her mental arrangements, when she learned that Colonel Belnard had betrayed a passion for Olivia, and she plainly discerned that he had made a confidant of her sister, merely that the affair might be carried on without letting the Doctor suspect how deplorably he intended to throw himself away. She knew the Colonel to be no fool respecting money matters, but

as young men sometimes were led into very silly actions by the heat of passion, this ridiculous event was possible. By disappointing the Doctor's hopes, he would of course be excluded his favour; if Sophia also could be urged to an indiscretion which would incur the same penalty, there then only remained the separation of the brother and sister, and Doctor Estlake must find himself under the necessity of relieving his solitary state, by seeking the cares and attentions of a wife, which her Ladyship resolved should be of her chusing.

When the melancholy accident first occurred, Lady Senegal sincerely lamented it for two reasons; she not only lost the resources of Estlake Lodge, but Sophia was unavoidably thrown on her

hands. While in the very moment of contemplating the share she had in this misfortune, Waltheim applied to her for advice; he relied on her judgment to direct him, and stated his determination to take some step which would convince Belnard that he could love his friend better than himself. After such an assertion she believed the young man mad enough for any thing; she hinted at Sophia, and finding he caught at the idea she intended to inspire, she roundly affirmed, that the poor girl despairing of a return to the attachment her heart had long formed for him, had in the disappointment of wounded pride, listened to the addresses of a man altogether unworthy of her, and who her uncle would certainly never acknowledge for his nephew. This hint was received with more enthu-

siasm than her most sanguine hopes could promise, and to manage Sophia only remained. Dimple had confessed his fears that the attentions he had devoted to the girl, might subject him to some personal inconvenience, and besides as she no longer inhabited her uncle's house, they were now extremely troublesome. Lady Senegal therefore apprized him that this was the favourable moment to withdraw them; Sophia was first piqued, then enraged; her friends, by degrees, discovered to her how long Waltheim had been attached to her, and jested very pointedly on the revenge she might take on Olivia and Marcella for their conceit and affection of consequence, and on Dimple for his treachery. The plan of elopement was regulated, and her Ladyship first premising that neither she or her sisters were

hereafter to be implicated, gave her most strenuous assistance. Waltheim and Sophia persuaded that their hearts had long laboured under the most horrid torments, mutually agreed to reward such constancy. Gratitude indeed, on both sides, had awakened sentiments which might easily be mistaken for passion, and they at length departed from Windsor, satisfied with the positive assurances of Lady Senegal that she would manage the affair, and bring about a reconciliation.

Thus having got rid of Dimple, who was no longer useful to her, and of Sophia in a manner that might turn out extremely so, she felt an assurance of success that inspired her with new courage. Her meeting with Mrs. Crank was a chef d'œuvre of artifice; in representing

Dimple as the person who had perpetrated this deed of violence. She took care to represent him in his true colours, (than which nothing could be more contemptible,) and the discovery of the mistake she knew would entirely exculpate her from all knowledge of the affair, and turn Mrs. Crank's rage against her daughter into approbation; if added to this a dissention with her brother could in the interim be affected, her resentment against him would certainly triumph in the disappointment of his young favourite's loss of a husband, and the seeds of animosity thus sown in the season of opportunity, promised a harvest of benefits peculiarly congenial to a mind which soared above the common enjoyments of humanity, and was ca-

pable of tasting only those pleasures which the prejudice of morality, and the weakness of nature, reject with abhorrence and disgust.

Every incident turned out to her wish; every word she believed had its due weight, and affected its due purpose. Mrs. Crank accused every individual that was innocent of plotting her destruction, and those who were guilty, obtained a double portion of influence. The Doctor had listened with a degree of gravity that she mistook for sternness; she hoped he would prove implacable, and resolved that no effort of her's should be neglected to render him steadily so.

CHAP. VII.

AN ALARM.

THE Doctor was both surprised and delighted to hear the next morning that his sister had returned to the Lodge. She had employed his thoughts almost the entire of the night, and loss of rest was visible in his changed complexion: but he complained of no pain, though he confessed much weakness, and Belnard perceived that a renewal of anxiety must quickly terminate in the most dangerous consequences. He therefore apprised Maddox to give him a hint, if any mes-

sage or letter arrived addressed to either him or the Doctor, that he might inspect the contents, and communicate them with proper caution.

But this, and the following day, passed without a signal, and the Colonel seeing his old friend suffer much uneasiness, proposed calling at the Lodge, and assuring Mrs. Crank that her daughter's indiscretion had not altered her brother's affections, and that he would immediately on learning the true situation and election of Sophia, settle on her the fortune he had ever intended. The Doctor joyfully assented to any terms of reconciliation that reason could propose, and Belnard left him fully commissioned to act as circumstances might dictate. The embassy was, however, without effect,

Mrs. Crank was denied to him, and James, who gave him this answer, very candidly acknowledged that it was all along of the ladies who were with his mistress, and knew what they were about. The Colonel asked him to explain, but he shrugged up his shoulders and affirmed, that he had no particular meaning in what he said.

Thus unsuccessful, Belnard reluctantly returned to Arnault Hill, determined merely to inform the Doctor that Mrs. Crank was from home. On reaching the gate, which was by this time completely repaired, a pretty looking young woman opened it for him, and as he passed through, she curtseyed as if to draw his notice. He instantly recollected her face, and asked if her name was Rose, and if she had

not once lived at the Lodge? She replied in the affirmative, adding that she was married to Mr. Arnault's gardiner, and had been entrusted with the care of the gate. The Colonel kindly congratulated her on her change of life, and wishing her happy was proceeding, when she glanced at him with an expression which evinced a wish to speak, and again checking his horse, he asked what she would say?

"If your honor," she replied in a low voice, "can step down here when the servants are at dinner, I will tell you something very odd."

Her words and manner surprised him, and he would have then questioned her further, but she appeared apprehensive

of being heard by his groom, and in obedience to her hint he went forward.

On entering the Doctor's apartment, he found with him surgeon Medforth, and easily divined from the countenance of both, that their conversation had been unusually serious. The old man asked had he brought the Olive branch, and on receiving the reply, he shook his head, pensively observing, that this was no time to trifle. Belnard's apprehensions were again awakened, and when surgeon Medforth left the room, he followed to ascertain with what reason. The surgeon candidly replied that no symptom of present danger appeared, but the invalid's constitution was too much spent to bear uneasiness of mind, and advised all possible means to reconcile the difference

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sumptuous, and willingly accepted a seat in her cottage, which was the picture of neatness and comfort, and patiently listened to her assurances that her husband, though an Irishman, was the very best husband in the whole county.

"It was he, Sir," she continued, "that desired me to tell your honor what has happened, because he says, as every body knows you to be a gentleman, you won't be apt to think I made too free."

Poor Rose thought of her master, and afraid of saying too much, she proceeded directly to the subject of the Colonel's curiosity. She informed him, that for several days past, a black man, dressed very poor, came to the gate, and talked

to the men who were busied in the repairs. She supposed he had heard from them the story of the accident, as he appeared extremely well acquainted with it; but when the workmen had finished their job, he still came every day, and asked questions of her. At first she did not suspect any thing, and answered him, but yesterday morning his coat was accidentally open at the neck, and she saw he had on a beautiful fine shirt. She took no notice, and he went away; but when Jemmy Moony (her husband,) came home to his dinner she told him, and he advised her to tell the Colonel, it being a thing next to impossible to speak to their master, and their young mistress was so *frightful*, she might think the black man intended to murder them, though Lord knows he seemed quiet and peaceable enough, only

a little curious about the gentlefolk up at the house.

Belnard demanded what questions he had asked?

"About the old Doctor, Sir, and where he lived," she replied, "and about the young lady that was almost killed in the fall; where she lived, and where she came from, and if she had a sister, and what was their names?

"And what did you answer?"

"I told him what Jenny the housemaid told me about, that they were saved from drowning,——your honor knows the story that was reported, and

Jenny learned it from your groom I suppose, for she has it pat enough."

The Colonel felt confounded, and inexpressibly alarmed. Unwilling, however, to betray his fears to Rose, he thanked her for her prudence in informing him, and desired if the man again appeared, that she would contrive to send to the house for him. She promised obedience, and he left the cottage.

This circumstance was too extraordinary to pass unheeded, and a combination of incidents pointed to the STRANGERS as being the sole objects of this man's enquiries; his outside dress was certainly assumed, and Belnard recollecting the jewels which were saved from the shipwreck, this corroberated as a proof that

their possessors from their local situation, were of too much consequence to elude the pursuit they were evidently in terrors of. It was easy to imagine that the accident had gained the public notice, and through this he supposed the succeeding interrogations were agitated; but he at least imagined that the danger of discovering might be averted by prudence, and he resolved to communicate Rose's intelligence to Marcella, and learn from her how far the event could either be braved or escaped.

Even to see Marcella, was, however, a very difficult task. She never left her sister's apartment, and he could only request an interview by writing; but this he remembered, would excite Olivia's questions, and perhaps alarm her; against

writing, he was therefore determined, and recollecting that Maddox often, by his master's directions, made enquiries for Miss Vere, by tapping at her chamber door, which was always opened by Marcella; he resolved to commission the discreet old man with his message, which he well knew would not be betrayed to any but the person it was intended for. On returning to the house, he therefore charged Maddox with the request written on a slip of paper, and received a verbal answer that she would see him immediately after tea.

The interval was endured by Belnard with much impatience, to which was added infinite vexation, when he learned that Miss Arnault had received a card from Lady Senegal, intimating her inten-

tion of spending that evening at the Hill. The subject of her visit he supposed to concern Mrs. Crank, and concluded that he would himself be called on to interfere, but as the incident he had to relate to Marcella, might be of too much consequence to admit delay, he resolved on speaking to her if she allowed him the opportunity.

The expected visiters, Lady Senegal and her two sisters, were received in stately assiduity by Mr. Arnault, who highly approved the strict formality in which his wily guests indulged him, and when her Ladyship, the moment tea was over, notified that she wished to speak to him, he led her to his library with the air of president of a privy council. Belnard took that opportunity to leave the draw-

ing-room; but to remain in the hall, must excite remark, and putting on his hat, he stationed himself in the porch, where he easily concealed himself from the glare of the lamp, and could see all who passed from the apartments, or came down stairs.

A few minutes ended his suspense: Marcella descended, and he met her at the stair's foot; but apprehensive every moment of being seen thus seeking a clandestine meeting, he in the hurry of thought, proposed her walking out with him.

"It is the best way," she replied, and taking a shawl which she knew to be Miss Arnault's, Belnard wrapped it round her, and they sallied out. The night

was delightfully fine, but had it not been, the thoughts of both were too much employed to leave them leisure for observation; and while they strolled round an enclosure which led towards the gate, Belnard endeavoured gradually to awake the suspicions of his companion, and pre-
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ed the most pr ntio very thick plantation,
posing her inte skirted the lawn, and through
Co which a walk led to an elevation that Mr. Arnault termed the MOUNT.

"Why do you fear being seen?" asked

Marcella, aloud; "if we meet any one, you can order them to leave us."

"ARRETEZ!" said a soft voice at no great distance.

Marcella started, and grasped the arm of Belnard in sudden terror.

"Quelqu 'un vord he met her at repeated. t apprehensive every seen thus seeking a

A faint shriek he in the hurry of she clung to Belnar walking out with

"Great heaven," he exclaimed, when his astonishment permitted speech, "what can this mean?"

"Hush!" she returned, with an air of wildness, that froze him with terror.

Both continued silent a few moments, but Marcella gazed around her, and appeared afraid even of breathing.

"My dearest Marcella," cried Belnard; "why this agitation? who dare approach, while I protect you?"

[illegible] said she calmly," it was [illegible] her ex- a modesty [illegible] a voice," he re- r, which [illegible] not reach you." esump- ution" she interrupted; "who now can shield us from murder and desolation?"

"I can," said he resolutely. "What human power can rob me of my wife?—

what human strength shall tear from me my sister?"

"Let us go to Olivia instantly;" she cried in a panting and hurried manner. "There is danger every where but with her!"—

"Dearest Marcella!" exclaimed Belnard, "recollect yourself—recover your composure before she sees you."—

"We must be gone," cried she, wholly unheedful of what he said.—"This is no place for us."—

Still grasping his arm, she drew him almost forcibly down the walk; the rustling sound of every falling leaf startled her, and the moment they gained sight

of the house she darted forward. Belnard inexpressibly alarmed for Olivia, pursued, but in vain; she rushed through the porch, and as swiftly glided up stairs, the top of which Belnard himself had just gained, when he heard her door shut to with violence, and double locked.

Fearfully apprehensive of the fatal effects which he supposed must follow this imprudence, he stood to listen, but a clamour of voices below, precluded all possibility of hearing distinctly whether or not his terrors were justified; and in a few minutes the persons speaking, issued from the drawing-room, and approached.

The aukwardness of his situation now suddenly recurred to him; he could assign no reason for penetrating so far into a

house of which he was not an inmate, and as the voices approached, he in his confusion, crossed the lobby to a narrow flight of stairs which led to the servants apartments. A door lay open; he boldly entered, and perceiving the room dedicated only to lumber, he felt inexpressible relief in this happy escape from the observations and surmises which he well knew would be agitated against him, had he refused or evaded the scrutiny of the Miss Cardinals curiosity.

All was again profoundly silent, and he hoped now to accomplish his descent unnoticed; a moment he stood in the doorway to listen if the passage was clear, and was on the point of quitting it, when a heavy foot in the next apartment hurried him back to his retreat; but in his con-

fusion, he unluckily pushed to the door which attracted the attention of the person passing it, who entered and screamed in affright at the sight of him; he however instantly recognized Jenny, of whose loquacity, Rose had that morning informed him, and judging that she might not prove inaccessible to his arguments, he assumed the manner most likely to ensure her compliance, and slipping a handsome bribe into her hand, he charged her to inviolable silence.

Jenny suppressed a laugh, took the money, promised all he demanded, and left him. He felt himself colour with shame and mortification, and with increasing impatience again listened for the silence that was to permit his escape. At length he ventured forth; he gained the

lower landing-place, and was stepping softly across it, when a door at the opposite side from that which Marcella had entered, gently moved, and through the very limited opening he distinguished the pink dress of [illegible], who evidently stood there to observe him. Thus betrayed he could only brave what was not to be evaded, and continued his course without further caution.

His first impulse was now to go in search of the person by whom so many distresses had been caused, but Maddox coming from his master's apartment, told him that he had been sent in search of him, and he immediately obeyed the summons.

The moment he beheld his old friend

he discerned that something had occurred which added to his late disquietude, and there was a strong mixture of resentment in his agitation. Belnard suspected that Lady Senegal had been there, and soon found his suspicions justified. The Doctor did not relate their conversation, but he expressed himself extremely angry with her, and with his sister; and acknowledged that he had requested her Ladyship no more to interfere in his family arrangements.

Belnard falteringly asked if Mrs. Crank had yet heard from Sophia?—the Doctor replied, no; and as it was most probable the giddy girl was gone to the north, and also probably would not write till after the knot was tied, no confirmation of their surmises could be

expected for some days longer. He added, that his sister had sent him a message which he refused to answer till after that time, and he had directed that she should then receive his reply in person, and not through the medium of *any* friend.

The old man then endeavoured to converse on other topicks, but without success; his thoughts were too much engaged for the appearance of indifference.—Belnard himself had much to think of, and anxiously awaited the Doctor's hour of going to rest: before it arrived however a message was brought to himself from Lady Senegal, offering him a place in her carriage. He declined the proposal, but immediately after took leave of his old friend.

But to leave the house without enquiring for Olivia, and to pass the gate without endeavouring at least to obtain some knowledge of the invisible terror, were equally impossible. He heard Lady Senegal's carriage roll from the porch door, and expecting to find Miss Arnault alone in the drawing-room, he went to it. She was not, however, there; and a servant told him that she was with her father in the library. Belnard waited a considerable time.——She at length appeared, but her father was with her, and his presence always precluded enquiries which he deemed ought properly to be made to Miss Vere's attendants. Belnard was fortunately aware of this, and also fortunately, by accident received the intelligence he wanted; Miss Arnault among other things, mentioned,

that Marcella had thrown herself quite ill by confinement, and that her sister had this evening been obliged to nurse her, as she had hitherto nursed her sister.

Mr. Arnault dwelt on this subject, and Belnard thought he vaguely hinted at the situation of the young ladies, as if acquainted with its singularity. To avoid therefore any discussion, he bade his adieus with the necessary formality.

Instead of mounting at the door he walked down to the gate whither his horses followed, and not choosing to let his groom hear his conversation with Rose, he went into the cottage. She was seated with her husband opposite a clear fire, and the table which divided

them was covered with a comfortable and substantial supper, of which Jemmy Moony freely offered him share; but though truly sensible of the hospitality, he was too eager to obtain the information he came for, and demanded of Rose if her black friend had paid her a visit that day?

She answered, no; and Jemmy very clearly accounted for the omission; he had met him that morning in the private road, and gave him as he said a little friendly advice not to be prouling about, and though Jemmy avowed himself not at all inclined to quarrel, except when he was vexed, yet such a thing might be, and he thought it was as good to send the man away before it happened, as after.

The Colonel then informed him, that the fellow had certainly disobeyed the injunction, as he had heard his voice, and proposed going through the little plantations in search of him.

Jemmy accordingly seized a bludgeon, and he and the Colonel made the search, but without effect; the poor man now became really frightened, and very seriously asserted that the devil had a spite against somebody in the place, and would surely come for them soon. Circumstances had given colour of truth to the first assertion, and Belnard sincerely hoped that the last might be a *blunder*, but he communicated none of his fears or real suspicions to his present companion, and on returning to the gate he mounted his horse and pursued his way.

CHAP. VIII.

NEW INCIDENT.

THE interview which Lady Senegal had thus a second time snatched with the Doctor had effected him so much that Colonel Belnard could feel no surprize at hearing his old friend had rested very ill; but he was able to rise at his usual hour, and they mutually wished to persuade each other, that no serious consequence could result from the disturbance.

But the abstracted thoughtfulness of

the invalid plainly indicated that his reflections were engrossed by no trifling subject; his eye frequently rested on Belnard with an expression of fatherly affection even beyond all he had hitherto evinced, and his enquiries for Olivia were reiterated and earnest. His young friend made several ineffectual attempts to draw him from these contemplations, and foreseeing the dangerous effects of indulging melancholy and depression, anxiously wished for the surgeon's visit that he might ascertain how far his apprehensions might probably be realized.

A loud knocking at the porch door at length seemed to announce his coming, and Belnard hastened to meet and apprize him of what had occurred. Perceiving however a gentleman pass into the draw-

ing-room whom he knew not to be surgeon Medforth, he was retreating again into the chamber, when he was transfixed to the spot by hearing the servant say "he would acquaint Miss Marcella Vere." The man then returned from the drawing-room and was proceeding on his message, when Belnard stopt him by demanding who wanted Miss Vere.

"A gentleman, Sir, in a very great hurry; but I told him she was sick, and he says he must see Miss Marcella."

"I will tell her myself," said the Colonel, and sprung up stairs.

Fortunately he met Miss Arnault, and requested her to inform Marcella, that he

wished to speak to her for one moment. She instantly obeyed the summons.

"What?—what is the matter?" she exclaimed, before he had time to address her.

"Nothing;" he replied, in a firm tone, "for nothing can happen while I am here to protect you."

"But why do you say this?—why are you too so terrified?"——

"Only for your terrors;—you are enquired for, and—"

She faintly shrieked!—turned, and rushed into her apartment, the door of which, as before, she double locked.

Belnard stood to reflect on what step he ought to take, and happily recollecting that Miss Arnault being locked in could give any assistance that might there be required, he determined to see the gentleman, and declare himself the accepted protector of the persecuted strangers.

Having once adopted this resolution he instantly descended to execute it; indignation against the supposed ruffian swelled in his soul, and with a countenance strongly expressive of that intrepidity which cooly flings existence at the point of the sword, he entered.

The gentleman was already at the door to meet the person he expected, and betrayed severe disappointment; but though

he drew back, he yielded a salute at once polite and commanding; and his appearance altogether was strikingly and peculiarly captivating. Belnard stood suspended—he felt himself extremely embarrassed, and at length asked, if he could be favoured with his commands.

"I fear not, Sir;" answered the gentleman with an air half gay, half disturbed; "my commands are only for two ladies, whom I have received information are in this house."

"Your information," said Belnard in a determined tone, "was, I believe, correct; but I am empowered to receive any communications you may wish to make."——

"Empowered!—communications!"—he repeated, his features strongly expressive of emotion and displeasure; "you appear to speak with authority, Sir."

Belnard bowed.

"*Legally* authorized, Sir, you certainly are not, or my information is *not correct?*"

"I am at least so far empowered to protect them;" answered the Colonel, "that they shall not be seen unless they themselves desire it."

"Here is some mistake" said the gentleman, at once relieved—"they would not refuse to see me,—unless indeed—" and again he looked alarmed.

"The mistake is only your's, I believe," said Belnard; "you supposed them defenceless."—

"What then, Sir!" he fiercely returned.

"——You *find* them otherwise," answered Belnard calmly.——

"By heaven," exclaimed the stranger "I will know the cause of this." He paced the room with hurried step and in violent perturbation, and Belnard while he attentively observed him, with difficulty preserved his firmness. There was a degree of acute but manly feeling in his open and animated countenance which strongly confirmed his assertion that there must be a mistake.

"If," said Belnard, "you can have patience till Miss Vere is recovered."

"Patience?" he interrupted——and fiercely approached close to his antagonist;—"no, Sir,—I will not have patience—I must see Marcella now, and with her it remains whether I ever see her again."

Belnard would have replied, but his attention was rivetted on another object; the door had in that instant opened, and he beheld—Olivia—pale—emaciated—her arm in a sling, while the deep mourning of her dress, added, not only to the interest, but the delicacy of her figure.

He almost doubted his senses as he gazed, but she advanced towards them.

"No more trifling,"——cried the gentleman impetuously.

"LEWIS!!!"—exclaimed Olivia, in astonishment.

He turned as if struck by electricity, and instantly caught her to his bosom, almost as much overcome by the meeting as she was herself; she appeared indeed nearly fainting, but his delight prevented him observing it, and while he repeatedly and rapturously clasped her to his bosom, and pressed his lips to her palid cheek, his own was traced with tears of tenderness.

Belnard beheld this scene with sensations indefinable; a confusion of doubts crouded on his imagination, but seeing Olivia unequal to the contest of her own feelings, he agitatedly endeavoured to support her to the sopha, on which she

sunk weak and breathless, but sensible of a degree of happiness, which in the bosom of the coldest lover might have excited the most painful fears.

"Olivia!——dearest, beloved Olivia," cried the stranger; then gazing earnestly on her face, he added, "alas! what fatal events have befallen you? why are you thus changed?"

"It is only in appearance," she replied;—"dear Lewis, you find Marcella and myself, in affection, still the same."

The fine youth energetically clasped his hands, when Olivia as if suddenly recollecting the presence of Belnard, turned her head to address him. At a glance she seemed to comprehend the various

sensations that rendered his face as bloodless as her own, and evidently anxious to relieve them, presented to him her hand with an expression of countenance that sunk deeply on his soul.——He eagerly caught it to his lips, but finding his feelings impossible to be controuled, he was compelled to relinquish it, and walked to the window.

"And where—where is Marcella?" demanded Lewis, "was it she who refused to see me?"

"Can you ask that question," returned Olivia, "after what I have said?—if you knew the strange events that have passed since you last saw us, you could feel no surprise that her fears of an enemy, outweighed her expectations of a friend."

"I do know them, at least many of them, and have long been in search of you. It was by means of your faithful Alladin that I this morning discovered the place of your residence."

"The poor fellow is then safe!" exclaimed Olivia, joyfully; "thank heaven!"—

Belnard still leaned against the side of the window, and in despite of the implied assurance of Olivia, the fire of jealousy burned in his brain; and unable longer to endure its agonies, he darted a furious glance at Lewis, and was crossing the room to leave it, when Olivia's voice prevented him. She arose from her seat, and approaching him, again with infinite expression offered her hand.

"Shall I prevail on you," said she, "to inform Marcella that her apprehensions were groundless? You have seen that Lewis is dear to me, but he is yet dearer to her."——

"Is this exactly true, Olivia!" he demanded, earnestly fixing his eyes on her face.

"Exactly," she replied, faintly blushing.

"I am satisfied," said he, "and truly grateful for the acknowledgement.—Marcella shall see her friend, and you will permit me an opportunity hereafter to offer him my apologies for the part I had taken against him."

He then hastened from her to obey her

request, but in the moment he opened the door, Marcella rushed in, her eyes wild, and her whole appearance distracted.

"Save her—save Olivia," she exclaimed to Belnard, before she saw who was in the room; but an ejaculation of transport from Lewis caught her ear, and the transition from extreme terror to extreme joy instantly overwhelmed her senses.—She fell motionless into his arms, which with difficulty sustained her: his limbs shook under him, and Belnard saw that he wanted assistance nearly as much as Marcella herself.

A few moments, however, recovered both, and the assertion of Olivia was fully confirmed. The feelings of Lewis

were too big for utterance, those of Marcella were agitated and confused.

"I will leave you now, Olivia," said Belnard, "if you promise me to compose your spirits."

"They are already composed," she returned—"believe me this is a fortunate and a happy event."

"And as such I rejoice in it.——I go my Olivia, and entreat you to be calmed; your health is essential to me."

The weight of every care was now removed from the bosom of Belnard:—visions of bliss danced before his eyes, and his heart swelled with emotions of indescribable delight. Olivia had tacitly

avowed her intentions towards him, and though yet without a mutual or definite explanation, he was fully assured that in permitting him so largely to hope she designed him no disappointment.

Under the influence of these feelings, he returned to the Doctor's apartment, and found surgeon Medforth with him. Instantly on his appearance, they both fixed their eyes on him, and demanded the cause of such a revolution? He rallied without replying to their question, but the Doctor in a serious manner, asked if he might interpret according to his own wishes? and Belnard replied, "yes."

"God be praised," he murmuringly

exclaimed—"the fiat may now be issued."——

The expression both of the words and manner, announced particular import. Belnard's heart again sunk—and the surgeon drew him to the window to caution him against suffering any emotion to reach his old friend, whose life was held by a tenure too feeble to bear the least fluctuation. "Do not be depressed, Colonel," he added, "because I have mentioned this; I felt myself urged to put you on your guard, as he had just been telling me his apprehensions of some expected meeting with his sister. He has requested me to come to him to-morrow for a few hours, and I fancy it is to settle some arrangements respecting her: when that is over he may again recover

the strength he has within the last three days so unhappily been deprived of."

After some further conversation, surgeon Medforth was proceeding to visit his other patient, when Belnard recollected that he ought to know where to find her. He therefore briefly related her being summoned from her chamber to see a friend, with whom she and her sister were still engaged in the drawing-room.

The surgeon shook his head, and very soon after hearing the drawing-room door open, and the carriage drive away, he immediately left the gentlemen.

During his absence, the Colonel, in answering the questions of his old friend, was enabled gradually and safely to in-

form him of what had occurred, and on what was founded the delightful expectations which he now without a fear indulged.——

The Doctor listened attentively but composedly, and when Belnard had concluded this little history of the stranger's visit, he held out to him his hand in token of congratulations which his tongue had no power to utter. A few tears, however, which rolled down his emaciated cheeks relieved the *pain* of extreme *pleasure*, and throwing up his eyes fervently, he thanked heaven for permitting him to live over again in the happiness of his children.

The entrance of Maddox at this moment, interrupted them; he made a sign

towards the door, and Belnard obeyed it by leaving the room. Surgeon Medforth waited for him in the hall, and appeared much disturbed.

"Here is a circumstance," said he abruptly, "in which you must interfere, and I hope with better success than I have done. If you have authority with Miss Vere, or expect to have it, you must prevent her persevering in her present design."

Belnard, in alarm, demanded what that was?

"A journey," answered the surgeon. "She is mad enough, with a slow fever still lurking in her veins, to persist in her resolution." As he spoke this sentence,

they entered the drawing-room, in which Olivia only was seated.

Again surgeon Medforth, with much earnestness renewed his arguments, and at length positively affirmed that she could not outlive the fatigue of one single day's travelling.

"And whither would you go?" asked Belnard.

Olivia coloured with confusion, and remained silent.

"Come Colonel," said the surgeon—"I depend on your address in this case, and if it fails I will at all risques apply for Doctor Estlake's commands, which I

know Miss Vere will not disobey—you will find me with him."

"Olivia!" said Belnard, "after what has passed, it would be affectation in me to apologize for asking the cause of this suddenly adopted plan. I think myself entitled to guard your personal health, and your peace of mind, and however your delicacy might, at this early period shrink from a discussion of the cause on which I ground my presumption, reason will surely dictate to you the propriety of my interference.——May I believe that it does?

"——Surely."——

"Then to what purpose, are you going a journey;—and to what place?"——"do

you," he smilingly added; "spurn at an authority so prematurely exercised?"

"I will answer you as a friend," said she, "and even as a selected friend. As yet this may——"

"Satisfy me! you would say?—well my Olivia as yet I am content, and now as a friend, I entreat you to answer my questions?"

"I must endeavour," she returned, "to suit the length of my reply, to your patience and my own strength. I therefore simply inform you, that my sister and Lewis have been mutually attached from their infancy, and affianced in a very early age. Some malevolent interposition separated them for a considerable time,

but now that they again have met, I am compelled by a very solemn injunction from my mother to see them united."

"And why cannot they be united in your presence here?"

"There are legal obstacles, and which to Lewis, might prove extremely dangerous."

"But you cannot go a journey to Scotland," exclaimed Belnard; "your life would be the sacrifice, and even without necessity."

"I cannot think so," she returned, "nor ought I to give up my purpose."

"You ought to give it up," he answer-

ed, "and I will add, you ought to give it up to me. It is our duty to preserve the existence left us, and your's is now become a part of mine. Why—why Olivia are you thus agitated?"

"——Because——I cannot now explain, I am exhausted."——

"Then tell me that you have given up all thoughts of this journey; and however painful may be my alarm for the renewed uneasiness I see you suffer, I will endure it till entitled to your confidence."

"O, Belnard!" she cried, "talk not in this strain!——you know not what barrier may yet—"

"Barrier!" he interrupted——"none that can separate you and me. Nay, you shall not leave me with this oblique dagger in my breast; strike to my heart, or entirely withdraw it."

"Belnard," said she, with resumed serenity and seriousness, "Fate may have placed me on the edge of a precipice, which indispensible duties may compel me to plunge. If I can be your's without a crime I will; if we are separated, no man living shall ever possess my hand."

"Then secure it to me now," said he, "I see you apprehend an evil that to me is still mysterious; but Marcella's terrors were certainly founded in reality. Supersede all other duties by vowing obe-

dience only to me; and instantly.---Our mutual friend will for us break—"

"How---how," she cried, "can you rave thus madly?"

"I am not mad," he returned, "though you have suggested a single idea enough to make me so; relieve the doubts you have excited by certainty, and I will swear to you that no living soul but the Doctor himself, shall ever suspect our marriage till necessity or your permission give me liberty to declare it.

"You compel me," said Olivia, with much spirit, "to leave the house—though death await me in the journey."

"The journey?——impossible——you

cannot, you shall not attempt it. Doctor Estlake himself, your adopted father shall be informed of the danger that awaits you in the undertaking, and from the effects his first apprehensions for you had on his constitution, I am persuaded he would not survive the shock."

"Then," said she, "but one alternative remains. To you I will entrust the care of my sister till she obtains the guardianship of a husband."

"O, Olivia!" cried Belnard, "what a severe task do you impose; but I will perform it, if you ensure to me your own safety, by first pledging to me your hand. For us---and us only, under the existing circumstances would Doctor Estlake—"

"You forget your own character and mine," she interrupted, "in the proposal. I believed you superior to this folly, and blush to remember that I asked of you a favour you so unwillingly acceded to, and which I now repeal."

Her displeasure at once recalled Belnard's senses. He saw and confessed his error, and to extenuate it by an act of repentance, he earnestly pleaded for a return of the confidence with which she had honoured him, and at length obtained permission to accompany Marcella on her rapid and important journey to the north. But even this concession he plainly perceived was accelerated, if not granted by the entrance of surgeon Medforth, who with the warm earnestness of a friend and physician, added his intreaties to

those of Belnard's, and Olivia without a further cavil, yielded her assent.

The fatigue of spirits she had undergone in this little dialogue, quite exhausted her strength, and Jenny was called to assist her to her chamber. Surgeon Medforth then told the Colonel that he had already taken into contemplation the very plan that Miss Vere had adopted, and suggested it to Doctor Estlake as the most effectual means of preventing a journey of which he had already guessed the import. All difficulties being thus unexpectedly arranged, Belnard could urge no excuse to detain him, and he endeavoured to think only of the period in which he hoped to claim from Olivia the expectations she had that day confirmed. When the Doctor heard surgeon

Medforth's supposition was true, he testified the most sincere and fervent joy, and on Belnard's suggesting that he might want him in even that short absence, he replied, that Olivia would make up to him the privation of all other society.

The remaining part of the morning, and the evening also, passed without any new interruption of the unvaried regularity that presided over Arnault Hill, and as the Doctor much fatigued with a conflict of sensations soon retired to rest, Belnard found himself earlier than usual at liberty to retire to the peaceful quiet of his temporary home.

But even here he did not long continue interrupted. A carriage drove rapidly

to the house door, a loud knocking succeeded, and immediately after Belnard beheld his antagonist of the morning enter.——

A mutual good understanding appeared even in the first salutation to be established, and the late contention totally forgotten. Lewis with a degree of familiarity that bespoke a consciousness of welcome, took a seat, and Belnard at once felt himself his friend. He ordered some wine, and in a tone of hilarity told his guest that from whatever land he came, he felt himself disposed to greet him, not only as a friend, but a brother.

Lewis seemed as if already apprized that such might be the fact, but the

servant being then in the room preparing the wine, nothing but general conversation was pursued till they were left to themselves. In this interval Belnard had time to observe the general appearance of his visiter: his figure though less than tall was light, elegant, and graceful; his manner peculiarly attractive, and the playful variations of his countenance, exactly suited to the modulations of a voice more than commonly harmonious. Good humour and good sense prevailed in every action, and though a something bordering on levity was conspicuous, there was also a something which by enforcing esteem, also enforced respect.

From the moment the servant had withdrawn the conversation became interesting, spirited, and confidential.

"You have hinted at mystery," said Lewis, "and yet, are yourself more mysterious than any other person."

"I should like to hear in what instance," returned Belnard.

"You shall have more than one instance," said his companion. "You are a man of sense,—a man of prudence,—a man of fortune,—a man of family,—a man of talent,—a man of caution,—in short, a rare man."

Lewis looked perfectly composed, though Belnard laughed, and again he continued.

"——And forgetting all these delect-

able endowments you fix your affections —— is it so?"—

"Proceed."

"——On a women who for any thing you know, possesses neither prudence, family, fortune, talents, discretion, sentiment, or delicacy."

"I think I can answer for all these being peculiarly her own."

"Particularize to me in what instance she excels other women?"

"In every instance of her conduct."

"But in that she has only displayed good sense, which many others of her

sex possess.——Point out to me one acquirement that is *peculiarly her own.*"

Belnard found himself at a loss.

"No;" resumed Lewis, "you have taken all for granted, and forfeited all pretensions to discernment or judgment — I advise you to give her up."

"Have you not hinted," returned Belnard, "that she will not give me up?"

"Aye?—that is a vexatious circumstance; but if you wish her to do so, you have only to plead inconstancy:— she will then despise, and soon after forget you."

"Beware," said Belnard, "of urging me to desert your service, in exciting my fears that absence may be dangerous."

This brought Lewis a little to order, and he at length explained the purport of his visit.

"It is to Alladin, my black servant," said he, "that, in truth, I owe the recovery of Marcella. He ran away from his master to tell me what misfortunes she had suffered, and his little detail relieved me from all the horrors of jealousy. Finding she had probably come to Europe I pursued her, and have been in England three months. Alladin went one way, and I went another, in the hope of finding some traces of my fugitives; when the accident so unfortunate to Olivia, proved

as fortunate to me. Through that it was that my black fellow first obtained the clue to search for them, and Marcella's voice last night confirmed all he wanted to know. He hastened to inform me, and I hastened so see her."

" Our interview you must admit was very pretty and pathetic. I wanted to take both sisters not only from the house but from the kingdom. Olivia however refused to leave Doctor Estlake, unless for the few days necessary to see Marcella married, and I left them to make the arrangements for commenceing our journey to-morrow morning."

" So soon ?" exclaimed Belnard.

" Yes, and you may suppose I hurried

our departure solely on your account, as the sooner you go, the sooner you can come back."

"That is tolerably obvious: but why did you wish to take Olivia from the kingdom?"

My principle reason I can neither reveal to you or to Marcella, though I this evening informed Olivia, but I could openly urge the propriety of her residence with a sister, and her accepting the protection of a brother. She briefly specified to me the situation he was thrown into, and her obligations to Doctor Estlake whom she would not be induced to abandon, and Marcella, to my great surprize at once declared that Olivia should not leave her kind guardian; it

soon, however, appeared that she suspected you would follow, and the old man thus be deprived of all consolation: so that in fact it is for you, and with you, she remains."

Belnard was even affected at this assurance; but Olivia's agitation and the word *barrier* were ever present to him, and he demanded of Lewis an explanation.

"I cannot now give it you," he replied: "the moment I am at liberty to do so I will. On my return from London this evening I had a long conference with Olivia who enjoined me to strict silence, but in part I must disobey her, and will depend on your discretion not to betray my confidence. I have called on her this

evening and we have discussed all points: —she is a charming women, and if you really deserve her, you must be a charming man!"

"I am at least a presumptuous man;" returned Belnard, smiling; "for I really think myself the only one who can make her truly happy. The pleasures that other women generally despise, are those that will most suit her taste, and those circumstances in which her sex universally place their felicity, she seems not to consider as worth a thought."

"What an admirable *guesser* you are!" cried Lewis. "I have myself known all this of Olivia, yet I never fancied her for a wife. Marcella and I shall be quite happy; we shall quarrel for the mere

pleasure of making up again, and we shall both contradict and fly into a rage, without either being angry."

"Your scheme of happiness is singular."

"And therefore it pleases Marcella. I have been her companion from our infantine years, and yet have not seen half the varieties and singularities of her disposition. Olivia would make a good wife even to a man she despised; Marcella is not so meliorating, and if I was not pretty secure in the full possession of her heart, she is the last woman in the world I would be tied to."

"What a picture have you drawn!" exclaimed Belnard.

"A very exact likeness. The soul of Marcella cannot stoop to trifles; Olivia considers nothing as trifling that belongs to reason and rectitude.——It is not natural for women to be so perfect."

Belnard laughingly observed that Marcella had found her counterpart.

"Yes," replied Lewis; "each will have the pleasure of remembering that the other is but mortal; in this at least we are not singular."

There was an air of drollery that accompanied every word uttered by Lewis, and evinced a heart free from care, and a mind perfectly formed. The gaiety he himself felt, he insensibly imparted to his companion, and Belnard entirely

pleased with him willingly yielded to the pleasure his society afforded. Thus drawn together by inclination, and contemplating the link of future affinity, each felt towards the other sentiments of long established regard, and Lewis having finally delineated the plan of the journey, at a late hour left his new friend, who promised to be in readiness at the time appointed.

CHAP. IX.

A HASTY WEDDING.

AT an early hour the following morning they accordingly met and proceeded in Lewis's travelling chariot, which he had the day before purchased for the occasion. On reaching Arnault Hill they alighted, and a message from the Doctor summoned Belnard to his chamber. The old man appeared alarmingly weak, and the animation of his spirits was too plainly forced, but he highly approved of the journey which deprived him of the attendance of his young friend, and asserted

that he hoped to profit by his absence in obtaining the society of Olivia, which surgeon Medforth had already given permission for. He however urged Belnard to hasten his return, and gave him a parting blessing with extreme emotion.

A light tapping at the door called the Colonel from this oppressive scene; it was by Miss Arnault, who too much affected to speak, pointed to the carriage in which Marcella and Lewis were already seated. Belnard was aware that the purport of this journey was known only to the Doctor, but he felt pleased with this excellent girl for her regret in the loss of her companion, and affectionately thanking her for the tribute to friendship, he hastened to obey the impatient call of Lewis.

Marcella had concealed her face by a thick veil, but the continued sobs which burst from her bosom too plainly indicated the agitations she suffered. The soothings of her lover though offered with a tenderness that truly evinced his adoration, were by her disregarded. She turned from him with impassioned quickness, and seemed to regret the step she had taken in his favour. Lewis was grieved for her distress, but he knew the motive, and gloried in the possession of a heart so warm and feeling. He well knew that were she acquainted with the circumstance that Olivia had cause to apprehend, he could not have induced her to a separate fate; but in deceiving her into compliance he shielded her from dangers of which she was the principal object, and he hoped for the ultimate

preservation of her sister in her timely acceptance of Belnard's protection. The happiness of Marcella when irrevocably given to his care, must, so far as depended on him be safely guarded, and he exerted every effort to soften the sorrows which clouded the brow of sisterly affection.

They stopped to breakfast at St. Alban's, and Belnard involuntarily looked around him in expectation of seeing Waltheim, who he firmly believed had gone the same road, and for the same purpose; but recollecting from the time that had elapsed that the runaways had probably only just reached the borders of Scotland, he contented himself in the belief that their meeting was yet distant.

From this town the journey was rapidly pursued. Lewis had taken the precaution of sending forward to order relays of horses, and nothing occurred to impede their progress. On the third evening they arrived at Lancaster, where dinner was prepared, and this being hastily swallowed, Lewis impatient to proceed looked from the window to see if the carriage was ready, in that instant a chaise drove up to the inn door; he called Belnard to observe the pair that occupied it, remarking that the bride was a comely looking lass; when Marcella who also stept forward to view them, hastily retreated, pronouncing in consternation the name of Waltheim.

Belnard, though not surprized, was anxious for many reasons to avoid being

seen; but he could not resist the impulse to ascertain if Sophia, or Sophia only was the companion. He concealed himself behind the window hangings, and in full view beheld Waltheim, who had just alighted and was assisting a lady from the chaise, who was indeed Sophia herself. All his doubts on this account were now ended; and Marcella openly congratulated him on the removal of every obstacle to claiming the hand of Olivia. The subject was however infinitely painful to him, and Lewis who was fearless of being recognized having seen that the way was clear, they succeeded in regaining their carriage, and continued their rout.

The following evening they reached Gretna Green, and in an hour after, Lewis

was the acknowledged husband of Marcella. Hitherto her mind occupied by the image of her sister had dwelt but little on the approaching union, and her spirits rather flurried than agitated supported her through the ceremony, but the endearing expressions of Lewis, and his rapturous gratitude, awaked her as if from a dream, and her recollection becoming clearer the tide of feelings rushed on her senses: she wept excessively, which happily restored her to composure, and enabled her to participate in the joy this important event occasioned.

Lewis thus in the established possession of his own wishes, experienced the most ardent anxiety that his friend's happiness was as firmly secured, and proposed to Marcella that they should now dismiss

Belnard to obtain from Olivia the reward of his fatigues. Her reply was suited to her character; a selfish inclination was not consulted, or rather it might be said that she most consulted her own pleasure when she most sacrificed to her sister's welfare; Lewis on pretence of ordering refreshments now left the room and made a sign to Belnard, who followed into the next apartment.

"Now," said he, "I salute you as a friend to whom I owe obligations more than I dare avow: the will of Mrs. Vere is however obeyed, and I may confess to you that it was with deep regret I separated you from Olivia; but had I not consented to do so, she would have persisted in coming herself, and the consequence I need not advert to—return to

her my dear friend.—If possible avert her evil destiny by obtaining her hand, and trust me she will more than reward you."

"My dear Belnard," he continued, "indulge not this apprehension. I acknowledge to you that there are persons in search of her, but I took effectual measures to prevent them through me tracing her.——I really believe you will find her as you left her, and if so I charge you admit no delay in making her your wife. From that moment all danger ceases: the oppressions of tyranny and vice can never pierce the shield of England's laws when raised by the arm of a husband, but I must now confess to you that I have forfeited the protection of that shield."

Belnard started!

"Don't be frightened," resumed Lewis, laughing: "I have certainly committed a very daring robbery; I have stolen my wife who is a ward of chancery, and if we are caught I should have reason to tremble. To fly the kingdom is my only refuge from persecution, and I have already concerted measures to do so: Olivia knows all this, and does not expect again to see her sister till the expiration of nearly three years; we shall then return without apprehension, and establish in the union of friendship and alliance the sentiments which now fill my heart. —My dear Belnard—may I soon be your brother!"

The solemnity alone of this address

would have spoken volumes to the most indifferent hearer, but to Belnard its force was irresistible. He caught the hand which Lewis presented, and looked the feelings he had no voice to utter.

The two friends now returned to Marcella, and found her much more composed than they could hope for. While they partook of a slight repast she talked to Belnard of his views, and charged him as Lewis had done to admit no delay in his union with Olivia. At length the moment of parting arrived, and she might again truly repeat that she did not disgrace the example of her sister. Though extremely agitated she was yet firm; "go!" said she, "and ten thousand blessings hover around you. Tell Olivia that you left me happy as her warmest

wishes can imagine, and without one anxiety for myself. If her fate is equally enviable my angel mother's benedictions will be more than answered."

The energy of her expressions and the look of fascination she glanced at Lewis deeply affected both him and Belnard, and the latter catching her with enthusiasm to his bosom, snatched up his hat and left the room, followed by Lewis, who saw him into his chaise, pressed his hand, and made a sign for his own carriage to drive up as Belnard's whirled from the door.

CHAP. X.

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

URGED by motives so important, Belnard's anxiety could ill brook delay. On arriving at the next stage he adopted the same precaution that Lewis had done, and sent forward to order relays of horses; by pursuing this plan during the whole journey, he speedily accomplished it without disappointment, and once more beheld the house in which he had almost a week before left Olivia.

The mental and personal fatigue he had undergone, rendered him nearly incapable of resisting the torrent of appre-

hensions which crouded on his heart as he drove up to the porch.

"All well?" said he as he sprung from the carriage.

The reply only answered his fears. The Doctor was very ill.

"And Miss Vere?"

"Better, Sir."

"She is safe then!" he mentally exclaimed—"I can now support any misfortune that may be inflicted."

In the hall he met Miss Arnault, who welcomed him with the most animated pleasure; but to his interrogatories for Doctor Estlake, she mourfully answered

that surgeon Medforth had called two consultations, and no hope was entertained of his recovery.

"He is very earnest to see you," she added; "but Miss Vere must break the news of your return by degrees."

"Is Miss Vere with him?"

"Yes, and has sat up with him the two last nights."——

Belnard sunk on a chair, oppressed with anxiety and fatigue, and Miss Arnault left him to announce his return to Olivia. He now endeavored to collect his spirits for the meeting, but the sound of her footstep hastily crossing from the Doctor's room, again overwhelmed him, and he

was unable even to rise from his chair to receive her.

She entered with all the elevated dignity of mein, which he had on particular occasions seen her assume; but on turning her eyes to him, she started, and in astonishment pronounced his name.

He could now approach her, but as if too weak to support herself, she sat down, and he seated himself beside her.

"Great heaven!" he exclaimed, "what is the meaning of this agitation?" he beheld her face lividly pale, her eyes quick and piercing, and the hand he held was cold as death.

"What fearful terror is this that possesses you?" cried Belnard.

" Nothing—nothing," she answered, withdrawing her hand, and pressing it to her forehead—" I did not expect to see you—I thought it was—pray let me recollect myself."——

" Banish at once, and for ever," said he, " all apprehensions—I left your sister safe and happy, and return to you charged with the blessings of her and her husband."

" Husband! thank heaven!—I am now well again."——

Anxious to turn her attention, Belnard with the most soothing tenderness of voice, repeated his enquiries for his old and respected friend, and received a confirmation of Miss Arnault's account.

Olivia could give no detail, but she referred him to surgeon Medforth, who was expected immediately, and would relate particulars of all that had occurred. She would then have gone to apprize the Doctor that his prayers were granted in the arrival of his favourite; but weakness compelled her again to sit down.

"My Olivia," cried Belnard, "I can not permit this exertion——for my sake you must compose yourself——you have not yet welcomed me; not once told me you are glad to see me."

"I——I am glad indeed," she returned; "but you look thin and pale."

"I am, in truth, much wearied," he replied, "but if I could see your eyes

once turned on me as I wish, all fatigue would be forgotten."

"Hush, hush," said she, "no more of this."

"In this solemn moment," returned Belnard, "I admit that all language but that of grief, is inappropriate; but peculiar circumstances authorises peculiar conduct. My heart is incapable of wilful disrespect."

She turned from him, and rose to go; he would have detained her, but perceiving her determined, he no longer ventured opposition.

He had now leisure to reflect. The Doctor's state of health had long prepared him

for the present shock; but Olivia's altered appearance terrified him with fears for her life, as great as had lately been his apprehensions for her personal safety. Though he had left her ill, he found her apparently much worse, and the languid lustre of her eyes announced to him, that the slow fever which surgeon Medforth had declared, yet lingered in her veins.

From this train of sad forebodings, he was happily relieved by surgeon Medforth himself, who sincerely rejoiced at his arrival, and acknowledged that he had for the last two days, apprehended his old friend would not have survived to see him. The patient, he said, had now no complaint but total weakness, and suffered no pain; and if he outlived the joy of once more beholding his favourite

it was probable he might yet linger some days. To Belnard's questions for Olivia, the surgeon replied, that he really believed the cause of her aggravated illness was principally owing to his absence, and the fatigue of attending the Doctor which she would not give up; but when this melancholy event was over, change of air and scene would, he hoped, very soon restore her. Belnard again revived at this assurance, and while surgeon Medforth went to assist in announcing the happy intelligence, he retired himself to a dressing-room to prepare his appearance for the approaching interview.

Here he was very soon waited on by old Maddox, and the affectionate creature wept at seeing him.

"Ah, Sir," said he, "there has been sad doings while you were away, and I'm certain my master expected what would happen; for the very day you left us, he made his will, and settled all his affairs, as surgeon Medforth and Mr. Arnault can tell you.——But when at last, my mistress came to see him——Lord have mercy on me——she was in a terrible fury. She insisted that he should turn you and Miss Vere out of doors, and said that you made Mr. Waltheim carry off Miss Sophy on purpose that you might marry the strange Lady that no body knows. I believe indeed, your honor, that she thought my old master would be angry with you about that, for she looked quite glum when he said he hoped you might. But she stuck to the point, and went away with herself to London and to Bath,

and I don't know where; but the bride and bridegroom are gone to visit about, and she is gone with them."

"And left her brother in this state—— cruel woman."

"To tell the truth of her, Sir," answered Maddox, "I don't believe she thought him so bad, for I heard Lady Senegal tell her that he was in no danger, though her Ladyship and her sisters made as much moan about him, and were always sending to ask for him till yesterday, that they were obliged to go themselves to Bath."

"Are they then gone?" demanded the Colonel.

Maddox answered yes, for that Sir

Sentiment was returned from abroad, and had sent to call them home.

The loquacity of the honest old servant was at length interrupted by surgeon Medforth, who finding Belnard prepared, conducted him to the chamber of the truly venerable Doctor Estlake.

Colonel Belnard perceived on his first entrance, that light had been admitted, and immediately after beheld the emaciated form of his old friend, supported by pillows, and nearly helpless; but a ray of pleasure irradiated his eyes and played through the serenity of his features. He held the hand of Olivia, and as his beloved boy approached, he raised it clasped between his in a fervent ejaculation. Belnard unutterably affect-

ed, bent his head to receive his blessing, and Olivia quite overcome, concealed her face in the bed-clothes. The moment was strongly impressive, but the old man was the first to speak.

"GOD'S NAME BE PRAISED," said he; "I die in the arms of my children! May your's reward your cares, as you have rewarded my affections." Belnard's hand was by an involuntary motion, in this awful moment placed in his, and the saint-like man exerting an effort of strength, obeyed the impulse; he joined the hands he held in his, and in the name of the ALMIGHTY, solemnly and fervently prayed that blessings here and hereafter might crown their union.

Olivia started! raised her head, and

intently gazed at the action. The Doctor overcome, sunk back, but still she gazed in motionless amazement, when as if at once recovering her recollection, she snatched from Belnard the hand he yet grasped, and pressing it over her eyes, hastily exclaimed——" take——take me from hence."

Belnard stood aghast!——

" Pray take me from hence," she repeated——" give me air quickly."

She was sinking to the floor, when though nearly petrified with horror, he caught her in his arms, and supported her as she slowly moved from the bedside. He was conducting her to the window, which the surgeon threw open to admit

the air, but she vehemently uttered "no, no, take—take me from hence," and he almost carried her to the parlour.

"Leave me now," said she with quickness; "pray leave me---return to your friend."

"Great heaven!" exclaimed Belnard, "what dreadful fate is this that awaits me?"

"Go—go," she repeated with vehemence, and burst into tears.

Still she turned her head as if to avoid his sight, and he could no longer doubt that her distress arose from finding her hand so solemnly bestowed on him.

"Hear me, Olivia," said he in a low voice, his lips pale and quivering, and his features drawn by mental anguish: "the last act of our friend only sanctioned the gift which I already considered as mine; but if it destroys your happiness to confirm it so, I—freely abjure it:—you shall be equally free from my solicitations and reproach."

"Generous—kind—dear Belnard," she rapidly replied: "Even for you I dare not hazard my own approbation—leave me now."

"Inexplicable Olivia!—could hope have so deceived me, and do I now even in condemnation receive a reprieve?"

"O, Belnard," she beseechingly exclaim-

ed, her eyes raised full on his, and surcharged with tears: "save me—let your hand save me from the commission of a crime I would abhor in another. I dare not waver in virtue."

"Dare I demand it?—would not my principles be the safeguard of your's?"

"Yes—yes—I know it—in every other instance—but pray leave me!—another time."

"Only one question," said he—"Is the BARRIER insurmountable that thus separates you from the man to whom you are so solemnly consecrated?"

"Consecrated?---could heaven record the act?——I beseech you to leave me.'

"Loaded with your aversion?"

Again she looked up at him. "O, no!" she replied; "resign my heart and for ever secure my esteem."

"Olivia!——cruel——mysterious——you might find your happiness even in mine!"

She suddenly averted her face, and pushed him from her with an air of impatience: he snatched her hand to his bosom and lips, and instantly disappeared.

Too much agitated even to seek for composure, he returned instantly to the chamber of his departing friend. The almost expiring lamp of nature had received a momentary renovation from the breath of happiness in the accomplishment of his last wishes; but in

that the good old Doctor had given up all interest in earthly concerns, and had now yielded to the power of a stupifying slumber. The assurances of surgeon Medforth only, could persuade Maddox that his beloved master still existed, and the extreme anguish of Belnard might well be attributed to the same cause. The silence of death indeed reigned around, and the kind-surgeon, who though not entirely deceived in Belnard's agitation was still ignorant of the true cause, knew that the house of Mr. Arnault could afford no gleam of comfort or consolation to any grief that might affect its inmates, resolved to remain himself during the night, and act the part of a friend when he was no longer useful as a physician.

Every thing happened as he expected.

The Doctor neither moved or appeared to breathe: the evening and part of the night was passed in mournful expectation till about two o'clock, when a deep-drawn sigh disturbed the silence. The surgeon felt his pulse. He was gone for ever !——

CHAP. XI.

A STRATAGEM.

WHEN this event was announced to Mr. Arnault, he issued strict orders for the due observance of all the ordinances custom had established on these occasions. To him had been entrusted the last will and testament of the deceased, and he accordingly took the necessary steps to the performance of the regular formalities, by dispatching requisitions of attendance to every person that might be concerned, amongst whom Mrs. Crank stood most conspicuous; and the day appointed for

the meeting was fixed at the expiration of a week. In the mean time he, with the assistance of his coadjutors surgeon Medforth and Colonel Belnard, made every arrangement for the interment according to the verbal injunctions he had himself received, and as all these directions were duly and rightly regulated, the necessary succession of measures kept each its proper station, and the house of mourning to the eyes of a mere spectator, rather wore the semblance of gloom and gravity than real concern.

Belnard now more than ever, found that Mr. Arnault had not piqued himself unfoundedly on what he stiled the fundamental principal of domestic respectability. Though sinking under the fatigues of a long journey, and the yet more

oppressive weight of mental suffering, the whole of this melancholy day passed without one hint that could be construed into an invitation to remain during the night, and his anxiety at finding himself disappointed in this hope became so serious, that he was almost tempted to establish himself an uninvited, and of course an unwelcomed guest; but from this idea, he turned with disgust, though he determined not for an instant to abandon the charge which Lewis had so solemnly entrusted to him. To leave Olivia unguarded, never once suggested itself even in thought, and he had almost adopted the resolution of watching outside the house, rather than intrude unbidden within, when the idea of the cottage at the gate recurred to his memory, and he hesitated not to become its inhabitant.

Congratulating himself on this measure, and eager to execute it, he impatiently awaited the usual arrival of his horses, and the moment they were announced he took a formal leave and departed. He quickly reached his anticipated abode. Rose only was at home; she was preparing her husband's supper, and supposing the person who entered to be him, she continued her employment, and asked as a matter of course how went on the folk up at the house?

Belnard answered, and she raised her head in surprise. He then instantly preferred his request, easily selecting an excuse from the concurrence of recent events; and Rose equally proud and delighted at the honor conferred, not only ensured him a clean and comfortable apartment,

though not a very fine one, but pledged herself that the strictest secrecy should inviolably be preserved that ever his honor had condescended so much.

He felt himself indeed ashamed, but his resolution was founded on necessity. The disposal of his horses now only remained, and however unwillingly, he had no alternative but to trust to the discretion of his groom. He ordered him to return in the morning at the stated time, that by riding up to the house he might incur no questions; and positively commanding him to silence, he saw him pass through the gate, and then returned himself into the cottage.

A clear fire side, and the appearance of cheerfulness and content, were in any

circumstances calculated to please; but in the present moment of grief for the past and apprehension for the future, Belnard found an enjoyment in the simplicity that surrounded him which his heart would have rejected in a palace. The heavy foot of Jemmy was soon heard on the threshold, and the surprize of so unexpected a guest did not abate the warmth of his welcome. Where the spirit of independence is softened by kindness of heart, nature exhibits a model of politeness, worthy more elevated imitation; Jemmy and Rose easily believed the protestations of the Colonel that he could not feel comfortable unless he partook of the common fare: the table was plentifully spread, and the persuasions of hospitality supplied the absence of appetite.

But to a mind wholly abstracted from present objects, nothing is congenial. His fatigue was apparent, and Jemmy having promised to let no living soul through the gate without apprising his honor, Rose conducted him to his little chamber, and left him to repose.

However mortifying to the pride of Belnard was the clandestine manner in which he hovered near his charge, the benefit accruing far outweighed the inconvenience, and he determined to persevere till some alteration could be projected in the situation of Olivia: but each succeeding hour assisted to reconcile him to his humble residence, and as he cautiously pursued every step necessary to his effectual concealment, the gloomy tranquillity of Arnault Hill experienced

no interruption till the mournful ceremony of the interment took place. The saturnine gravity of its owner had indeed suffered considerable infringement from the non-arrival of Mrs. Crank, but as she was not essential to the more important points of decorum he contented himself in the performance of those duties which individually belonged to him.

At length the hour arrived that was to consign the mortal remains of the truly Reverend Doctor Estlake to the silence of the tomb! In life he had ever been respected and beloved; the doctrines he preached were those of his own practice and the persuasions of fervent piety, meek dignity, and exalted urbanity flowed from lips untainted by the breath of any sentiment inimical to a servant of

God!——The scene had closed in the calm serenity of hope; and he was now followed by the tears and lamentations of heartfelt mourning.

To Belnard this event was a severe trial of fortitude;—something dwelt heavy on his heart, but to hesitate in paying the last tribute of gratitude and affection was an outrage to the memory of a benefactor and a friend. He took his place in the procession as chief mourner indeed, and endeavoured to believe the anguish of his breast solely arose from the loss he had sustained. The ceremony was conducted with all possible solemnity, and the son of adoption beheld the surrender of *ashes to ashes*, and *dust to dust!*

In the dwelling of Arnault Hill was now concentered all Belnard's cares and all his duties, and to the performance of them he returned with the utmost expedition. The servants he found assembled in the hall, and confusion and dismay were visible in their countenance and gestures: concluding instantly therefore that his fears for Olivia were now verified, he furiously demanded what had happened?

The answer happily relieved him:—Mrs Crank had arrived a quarter of an hour before, and was so enraged at finding herself too late that she raved like a madwoman, though Miss Arnault entreated her to be appeased.

Belnard easily distinguished the voice of passion, and the faint murmur of

remonstrance; to relieve Miss Arnault from her painful situation he was proceeding to the parlour door, when it was violently pulled open, and Mrs. Crank issued from it, her features inflamed and her eye-balls starting.

"Detain her Colonel I beseech you," cried Miss Arnault, "Miss Vere cannot survive the sight of her."

He stepped forward to intercept her, but determined in her fury to bear down all opposition she struck him a violent blow and rushed by. Surprise did not deprive him of recollection; he threw his arms round her waist; raised her from the floor, and carried her back into the parlour.

The scene that followed was terrifying! her face became black and swoln, and her power of speech wholly prevented by the convulsion in her throat. Her rage was levelled against Belnard, who seeing her situation really dangerous left the room, and sent in the female servants with remedies to her assistance.

In this moment Mr. Arnault fortunately returned, and Belnard entreated for his authority to quell the disturbance. He stalked to the scene of action, and on opening the door beheld his daughter kneeling before the frantic woman. The attitude displeased him: he ordered the weeping and agitated girl out of the room, and the women servants who stood aloof willingly obeyed the signal of his nod to escape in safety.

Colonel Belnard had in the interval flown up stairs. Certain that the noise must reach Olivia's apartment he hoped to prevent her terror by acquainting her with the cause; but on reaching the lobby he hesitated, uncertain what step to pursue. Since the death of their old friend she had not left her chamber:—he stood, his eyes fixed on the door, which now opened, and Olivia herself appeared as coming out; but on seeing her she retired and shut herself from his view. Astonished at the action he remained immoveable, when Miss Arnault quickly passed him, and entered the room in which every faculty of his comprehension was centered. The pang that succeeded recollection was dreadful, and turning as if to elude it, he descended the stairs.

The noise in the parlour had by this time considerably abated, and the servants apprehensive of their master's displeasure returned to their usual occupations. Belnard heard the impassioned sobs, which he hoped denoted only contrition, and willing to relieve the unhappy woman from the severe austerity of Mr. Arnault, he ventured to appear before her.

Again she fired, but intimidated by the presence of Mr. Arnault, she endeavoured to suppress the violence of anger, by softening her features to an expression of disdain.

"So Colonel!" said she, "your most honorable triumph is now complete. You kindly influenced your friends to

deprive me of the right of attending my brother's last moments."

"The asseveration," observed Mr. Arnault, "is too contemptible for cavillation."

"Because the truth is apparent," she retorted.—"Did he not want to banish me my brother's house when he first compelled me to leave him in his sickness? He persuaded the infatuated man I suppose that it was through kindness he desired Lady Senegal to take me home with her, but even she saw the design and advised me to disappoint it."

"Her Ladyship," said Belnard, "I now perceive had ostensible reasons for her breach of hospitality."

"She is my friend, Sir," hastily exclaimed Mrs. Crank—"I will not hear her abused!"

"A woman of her elevated sphere cannot apprehend from Colonel Belnard any conduct irrelevant to a man of fashion," said Mr. Arnault; "the censorian of a mere expression cannot repress the relievo of prominent merits."

The peculiarity of this speech eluded the confused understanding of Mrs. Crank. She glanced at the orator athwart Colonel Belnard, and looked half frightened, half puzzled.

"No assimilation of sentiment can I see take place on this occasion," resumed Mr. Arnault. "I therefore apprize you

Madam, that the last will and testament of your deceased brother is in my possession, and that by him I was duly empowered to take the appropriate measures for its legal publicity. I shall, therefore, according to the announciation already issued, read it this evening at eight o'clock, and you will do well to attend it, as it may enucleate all apparent causes for detorsion."

Mrs. Crank's powers of argument were quite overwhelmed, and as he waited in expectation of her reply, she quietly returned—" Yes, Sir."

" And you Colonel Belnard," added the man in office, slowly turning to him, " May now receive the explication of my meditated wishes. In thus fulfilling the

injunctions of your late respectable preceptor, I but fulfil a duty. It, however, remains for me to conjunct what is necessary to my own character, and prove a denotation of my sentiments for your's. The inuendo's of mortified vehemence cannot obtund the sincerity of my esteem, or urge me to antagonize where I have ceded my regard. You are in consequence, Colonel, ever ascertained of a suitable welcome to my house and my table; nor can I suppose that the familiarity of friendship will interpolate the privileges of decorum."

Belnard was disgusted! He coldly bowed, and Mr. Arnault left the room. The servants in the same moment entered to prepare for dinner, and he gladly avail-

ed himself of the opportunity to return to the solitude of his own reflections.

Receiving a summons at the usual time, he again repaired to the parlour, where Mrs. Crank still occupied the same chair. Mr. Arnault invited her to join them at dinner, but she replied, she would not eat a bit in that house. Belnard blushed for her; Miss Arnault looked concerned, and her father too much offended to reiterate his civility; she continued to sit in sullen silence, and none appeared again to remember that she was present.

At length the clock struck eight, and the party met in the drawing-room to witness the proclaimed ceremony. Mr. Arnault stood by the table, on which were placed four wax lights and the will. He

looked around to see that every required person was present, and missed Olivia.

"Where is Miss Vere?" said he.

"In her chamber, Sir," returned Miss Arnault. "If you can dispense with her presence——"

"It is important," he interrupted, "let her be called."

Mrs. Crank uttered something about "mock modesty," but the stern gravity of Mr. Arnault's eye prevented any outrageous expression.

Almost immediately the door opened, and Miss Vere entered. Her manner denoted more of sorrow than fear; and the

calmness with which she advanced, evinced entire self-possession.

"I thought Miss Vere," said Mr. Arnault, "that your presence had been especially applied for on this occasion?"

"It was, Sir; but though I concluded my absence or presence unimportant, I was prepared for either."

"Prepared!" ejaculated Mrs. Crank, eyeing her with superior malignity.

Miss Vere curtsied respectfully to her, and to Colonel Belnard; and Mr. Arnault broke the seals.

The Will itself had been made five years before, and remained unaltered.

Mrs. Crank and Sophia were mentioned with affection. Three hundred per annum was bequeathed to the first, and the sum of four thousand pounds to the last: his servants were all remembered in proportion to the length of their services; and Colonel Belnard remained sole executor and residuary legatee. To him devolved the dwelling of Estlake Lodge and the lands annexed; comprising gardens, lawn, and pasturage, as mentioned in the lease of those premises; together with Bank stock amounting to twelve thousand pounds, and also the outstanding issues and profits of the several properties the testator should possess at the time of his demise.

When Mr. Arnault concluded the perusal of this, he addressed Mrs. Crank.

" This disposition, Madam, of your brother's effects, he asseverated to me, you were already apprized of, and requested me especially to interrogate if you consider yourself as receiving due compensation?"

She coloured as if stung by the question, and replied that she wanted no compensation; but that her relationship entitled her to a share in the fortune of a brother.

" True," returned Mr. Arnault: " but had he indulged the stimulus of provocation, he had limited his bequest to the sum of one shilling. Are you satisfied in this distribution, or did you expect a divarication?

Willing to get rid of questions too elaborate for an unstudied reply, she sullenly answered that she was satisfied.

"Now then," resumed Mr. Arnault, "since such is your declaration, Madam, before these respectable witnesses, I may announce the codicil which militates only against Colonel Belnard." He then audibly read :—

"And I, the above named Robert Est-
"lake, having since the writing of the
"aforesaid, conceived a fatherly affection
"and parental solicitude for the young
"lady who has lately resided in my
"house, known by the name of Olivia
"Vere; and wishing to bestow on her
"some solid proof of that affection and
"solicitude, do deduct from the above
"mentioned legacy, willed and bequeath-

"ed to Colonel Charles Belnard, the
"abovementioned sum of twelve thousand
"pounds, and desire that the said sum
"shall be paid to the sole and separate use
"of the said Olivia Vere: and also the
"house, furniture, plate, and all moveable
"articles belonging to and being within
"said house, the ground on which it
"stands, and the lands surrounding it as
"aforesaid, still belonging to the said
"Colonel Charles Belnard; and I do fur-
"ther will that these separate legacies of
"house and lands, or either of them, shall
"at any future period devolve to the
"survivor, to be finally bequeathed by
"said survivor, as he or she shall
"think fit."

"And I do make it my request, (not
"desiring it as a will) that the aforesaid
"persons, Colonel Charles Belnard and

" Olivia Vere, accept these presents as a
" mark of the fond affection I equally
" feel for both, and in token of my grati-
" tude for the consolations I have receiv-
" ed from them in life and death; and I
" do further request that they, or either
" of them, will never sell or otherwise
" dispose of said house and lands, but keep
" them in their own possession during
" their joint or separate lives, and at the
" decease of the survivor, that said pre-
" mises may devolve to their descendant,
" whom I request may bear my name, in
" token of remembrance."

Belnard's eyes had from the first been fixed on Olivia, but though the meaning of the codicil had been obvious to her as to him, her sensations were evidently different from those he experienced. Her colour fled as if chased by extreme anguish,

and the moment Mr. Arnault had concluded, she rose, curtsied, and withdrew.

Mrs. Crank could no longer conceal her vexation. She wept and sobbed with troublesome vehemence, and Mr. Arnault teized and interrupted in the concluding proceedings, requested she would have the goodness to recover composure in another apartment.

This was the last insult she could endure, but unable to utter her indignation, she stammered something unintelligible as she obeyed, and drew the door after her with a clap that shook the whole house.

Mr. Arnault then informed Colonel Belnard that the manner of publishing the will and the codicil annexed, had

been dictated by the testator, who had made this final disposition of his affairs before his last interview with his sister, that he might feel satisfied in his own conscience of acting uninfluenced by any offence her temper might give him. He had also explained to Mr. Arnault, that to his sister and his niece the sums bequeathed would or ought to be affluence, and that as he had originally received from his pupils family all the independance he ever possessed, he deemed himself entitled to obey the dictates of inclination, and appropriate it accordingly.

At length this tedious and melancholy scene closed. Mr. Arnault retired to his library, and Belnard felt it as a duty to his late friend to enquire for Mrs. Crank. To his great surprise he was, however,

informed that she had immediately left the house on foot, accompanied only by the housemaid Jenny. To pursue her with remonstrance would, he well knew, only increase the storm of her temper, and he therefore resolved to content himself by sending his servant to enquire the success of her pedestrian journey.

Accordingly, when his horses came at the usual time, he as usual took his leave of Mr. and Miss Arnault, and departed: on questioning his groom, he learned that Mrs. Crank had not gone to the Lodge, and supposing that she had stopped in Windsor, which was distant only one mile from Arnault Hill, he dismissed the man with orders to find out where she lodged, and bring him word the next morning.

From Rose also he now heard a confirmation of her former mistress's violence; and very severe strictures passed on the conduct of Jenny, who, she affirmed, laughed in her sleeve at the poor lady's passion. Rose had requested her to walk into her cottage and rest till Jemmy could procure her a chaise from Windsor, or at least walk with her for safety, but she said she was as well known in the parish as any Jemmy, and would not be obliged for shelter to any living soul belonging to the shabby dog her master. Rose confessed that after this she no longer pressed her civilities where they were so ungraciously returned, and as it was a fine night she supposed the mistress and maid had walked on very pleasantly together.

Belnard was satisfied that Mrs. Crank

had no reasonable cause for complaint, and feeling his spirits extremely weary, he reminded Jemmy of his injunctions to let no one pass through the gate without apprizing him, and gladly retired to the solitude of his little apartment.

CHAP. XII.

A REJECTION.

REFLECTIONS on the altered conduct of Olivia might truly be said to render the pillow of Belnard, a pillow of thorns: anxiety rankled in his bosom, and apprehension obscured the visions of bliss which had lately been so delusively presented by fancy. His situation was, in every light, severely mortifying and unhappy, and while he eagerly panted to escape it, he could form no plan of conduct by which a speedy release might be effected. From Olivia's determinations only could he be enabled

to form his, and though the change in her manner, united to the late melancholy event, were powerful repellants to the explanation he sought for, he felt that the necessity that urged him might excuse the precipitation.

Restless and fatigued from a sleepless night, his anxiety to accomplish his purpose anticipated the usual arrival of his groom. He was dressed an hour earlier than the appointed time, and impatience frequently urged him to the gate in search of his horses. At length they turned down the approach, and on one he recognised his groom; the other was mounted by a woman, who on coming near enough to be distinguished, he perceived to be the individual Jenny, who had before caused him so much vexation in betraying

him on the lobby to the Miss Cardinals. The two companions leisurely jogged forward, and appeared extremely entertained with their mutual conversation, but when they nearly reached the gate they stopped their horses, and the lady slid from her eminence with the utmost ease.

"Remember!" said the groom, significantly nodding to her as he drew her steed forward.

"Never fear me," she replied, laughing; "I'll tell no tales out of school."

Jemmy now came out to open the gate for their admission.——Belnard saw no retreat, and too much humbled in the certainty of being betrayed, to evince the anger he felt, he silently mounted his

horse, and left the event to take its course.

But though thus hovering near Olivia, her continued confinement precluded him from all possibility of a chance interview; and he knew not how to request the opportunity for a conversation which she would assuredly refuse at this early period of their recent loss. His motives he was forbidden by Lewis to explain, and he could ill support the painful restraint of remaining a guest where no apparent circumstances could account for the unceasing intrusion.

At length the arrival of Surgeon Medforth on his daily visit to Olivia, afforded him some hope of a favourable change in his own situation, by announcing an in-

tended alteration in her's. The friendly Surgeon confessed to him, that he had presumed to give her positive orders to remove to other air and other scenes;—his skill, he said, had long been useless to restore her, for where the soul is too large for its confinement, the strength of nature was sometimes unequal to the contest.

"That this charming woman has a secret sorrow," said he, "I can have no doubt. I this day perceived she had been in tears, and has certainly suffered some severe agitation—but she has assured me she has dismissed the last cause of uneasiness, and will implicitly obey my directions."

"And what are these?"

"Nay," he replied, "you I fancy ought

to dictate in this case. She must leave this mansion of gloomy stupidity, and breathe a gayer air. Cannot you chuse her a residence?"

"Would that I could," answered the Colonel. "But surely she must remember that she has a house of her own."——

"I hinted as much; but she prefers going to a distance; she has promised to fix every thing and inform me to-morrow. No doubt, Colonel, she is delicate of asking advice from you, but it is possible you may at least influence her, and could probably point out what she is at a loss for."

"I wish," returned Belnard, "that the probability you mention could be esta-

blished, but by to-morrow we may be able to think of what ought to be done."

To endure the tediousness of time required every effort of fortitude and patience. Mr. Arnault dedicated the mornings to his library, and by Belnard the library was in consequence avoided; but he rambled about from the lawn to the garden, from the garden to the house and out again, in an anxiety of perturbation and incessant restlessness of spirit.

The first interruption he received was from Miss Arnault. She and her father were going to pay some visits to persons with whom he also was acquainted, and she invited him to go: he declined, and she appeared much surprised, but the subject was dropt; and Mr. Arnault soon

after calling her, he saw them set out on their expedition. The lonely silence that now reigned around was well suited to his temper of mind ; he continued for some time to walk about the drawing-room, till the brightness of the sun, which in its declension shone full in the windows of that apartment, invited him again into the open air.

Immersed in thought, he slowly proceeded round the enclosure, and crossed into the plantation walk leading to the mount. To the seclusion of this spot he still saunteringly pursued his way; it commanded a view of the surrounding country, and above all of Estlake Lodge, in which, the windows of the chamber Olivia had inhabited, were most plainly conspicuous. A sun-dial, erected in

front of the mount, served as a leaning post for those who chose leisurely to survey the prospect; and the Colonel crossing his arms supported them on this little fabrick, and ranged his eyes around without distinctly knowing what objects they rested on.

From a long depth of contemplation he was at last awakened by the sound of footsteps approaching; he turned, and with surprise and satisfaction beheld Olivia! On seeing him she started and coloured!—but quickly recovered her composure.

"Do not let me disturb you," said she, —"I merely came this way for a walk, in the supposition that all the family were

from home, and I was eager to enjoy my new found liberty."

"May I not be permitted," he replied, (endeavouring to overcome the shock of her cold address,) "to offer my congratulation on its restoration; and my sincere hopes that it may never again be abridged by the same cause."

"You are very polite," she returned; "this weather is so delightful that malady is obliged to desert us; but the air is so chilling cold I think I will return. Adieu!"

"You breathe cold Madam," said Belnard, piqued and mortified.

"Something has vexed you this morn-

ing Colonel," she smilingly replied; "if you were a little more of a horse jockey, I should suspect your favourite steed was indisposed."

"Great heaven! Miss Vere," he exclaimed; "what new tone have you assumed?"

"It is a new tone," gravely answered Olivia, "but I do not assume——I feel it——I have been too severely disappointed."——Her eyes filled with tears, and she turned to leave him.

"No;" said Belnard; "you go not now till an explanation relieves me from a suspense I find impossible to endure."

"True, knight errant," she replied, smiling faintly; "what damsel——"

"What deamon rather," he interrupted, "has given you weapons to bleed my heart?"

She looked at him as if surprised that he appeared so earnest.

"How inexplicable," he cried, "is this conduct."

"Rather," she returned, "how inexplicable to my sex is the conduct of your's?"

"To what do you allude, Madam?"

"Nay;" cried Olivia; "if you are

offended I am gone; I should be sorry you mean to quarrel with me."

"Sorry? my opinion now seems valueless."

"No, upon my honor! I knew not any opinion I think more highly of than your's. Your understanding is too good not to render your approbation extremely flattering."

"The power of your sex seems well known to you at least—cried Belnard: in the same moment you banish happiness and invite its return."

"To banish it," said Olivia gravely, "would in me be inexcusable, since it is impossible I can give it."

"Damnation!" cried Belnard.

"Permit me, Colonel Belnard," said Olivia seriously, "to assure you that there is not that creature living whom I would willingly disturb. I am sorry you are so much mortified."

"Mortified, Olivia?—good God! can you apply so simple an expression to feelings such as you have excited?—It is impossible you can doubt the sincerity and fervency of my passion for you!"

"Once I did not doubt;—and even now I am induced to believe."

"Induced to believe it?"——

"There was also a time," she falter-

ingly resumed, "that I could have been induced to return it; but change of circumstances produce change of sentiments!"

"Amazement!" he cried; "Olivia influenced by an acquisition of fortune."

"That at least," she answered, "is impossible; since I will accept of none.—"The last act," she added, turning away her face, "and the last will of Doctor Estlake, pointed to an event which can never now take place."

"Never?"

"Pardon me?" she quickly cried, "you are more wounded than I could have believed possible; but trust me Colonel

Belnard, not more wounded than I am myself."

"Almighty heaven!" he exclaimed; "to me Olivia can you use this language? after a positive, an unequivocal acknowldgment of attachment."

"That once I felt it, I admit," she replied; "but the intervention of mere accident had imposed on me obligations which I dare not transgress. I will further acknowledge that till now, I regretted the prevention of your wishes and—mine; ought I not then to rejoice at the restoration of my own heart, since I could not accept of your's in return?"

"O, Olivia! this sentence so strange

—so inexplicable, is not—cannot be irrevocable."

"It now gives you pain," she returned, —"the time will come, when you will thank me for it."

"Impossible!—under any circumstance you know it is impossible!—capricious Olivia! how cruelly do you destroy me!"——

"No, Colonel Belnard," she solemnly replied; "to give you my hand would now but deceive us both. Were my affections still your's, and were we united, the film of passion would soon drop from your eyes and mine:—better my opinion should change before than after marriage."

" The mystery deepens!" said Belnard: " pray Olivia speak plainly the cause of this accumulated condemnation?"

" My opinion of you I repeat, is altered. Unhappily I once believed your character perfect; I now find it not so: —the heart of a woman is composed by nature's hand of such materials that though in the prevalence of custom we admit the intercourse of friendship without too severely investigating the merits on which that sentiment is founded, we yet in the union of marriage——"

" Proceed, Madam."

" Such is my opinion of the state," she answered in some confusion, " that with-

out perfect esteem and confidence of worth, I cannot suppose there can be perfect happiness."

"And is your esteem and confidence in me destroyed?"

"No; the first at least certainly is not, though perhaps it is much lessened; —I still respect, esteem, and admire you; but the feelings I have experienced from what no doubt you consider as trifling, have been sufficiently powerful to restore to me those affections which I lately feared were irrecoverable."

"Now! now," exclaimed Belnard; "I breathe again.—I have been traduced, and nothing remains but to clear myself from censure.——Your heart is only with-

drawn;—it has only recoiled a little from the frightful image I have been represented; I shall again seize my truant inmate, and the last prayer of our mutual father will be answered."

"O, Colonel Belnard!" cried Olivia in emotion, "why have you yourself rendered this impossible?—but it is best it should be so. The obstacle I first beheld would still exist, and——

"And, in what?—in what?" he repeated with vehemence.

"Pray," said she, "release me.—I am chilled:—the air is piercing."

"But nothing is so piercing as the anguish you have inflicted.——I cannot,

must not let you leave me without first hearing my vindication. In justice, in honor, you cannot refuse."——

"I do not wish to hear it," answered Olivia.——"Excuse me for saying you cannot give it."

"All is then finished!" exclaimed Belnard wildly—"but you never loved me or you could not thus give me up."

"It is better you should think so;" she replied—"and probably it was really so:—you and I no doubt have different ideas of the passion."

"By heaven!" he cried, "the passion you have so fatally imprinted is as pure as it is violent!—your person to me would

be valueless unless animated by the soul it contains."

"Accept then," returned Olivia, "my thanks, my gratitude, and my regret.---- I grieve indeed that you suffer so severely as I now see you really do, nor did I suppose that passions so incongruous could meet in the same soul."

"O, Olivia!" he cried, seizing the hand she presented with both his, and pressing it to his forehead; "dearest! beloved Olivia! for whom alone my heart has known sentiments so painful and so endearing, recall your dreadful resolution, hear my vindication, and give me happiness in giving me yourself!"

Olivia shook her head in emotion and

turned from him.—" Colonel Belnard," she mournfully answered, " why do you persist in believing that with me you could be happy?—thinking as I think were I your wife I would indeed be truly miserable. The idea is shocking!—pray, —pray let me go."

" Then go," he cried;—" inexorable and unfeeling! ought I to wish for a heart composed of such cold,—such frigid materials?"

Her eyes turned on him an expression of sadness and pity that again wrung his soul;---he hid his face in anguish, and she slowly moved down the walk.

The moment was dreadful.---Belnard in the final destruction of his happiest

hopes experienced a frightful revolution:---feelings too sensible for madness---too lively for despair!---a bitterness of soul impossible to delineate!---too acute for reason.——But the first transports were soon over, and his heart became a prey to contending regrets and contending resolutions. His spirit bearing down all opposition now suggested ideas which in the next moment were discarded:—— to relinquish her? impossible——to obtain her? impracticable.

Some time elapsed without producing any considerable elevation to this ferment of passion, when he was startled by the sound of some person approaching. He sprung from his seat, and a footman, who just then ascended the mount, asked if Miss Vere was there?

"Don't you see she is not?——why did you come here?"

"Two gentlemen, Sir, want her in a great hurry, and my young mistress who is only just come home, thought she was here."

"Two gentlemen!——who are they?"

"They did not give their names, Sir, but they are very fine gentlemen. They want to see her directly."

"Stop," cried Belnard, hastily stepping forward, "I will first see them."

He quickly emerged from the walk, and was much surprised at the sight of a very handsome coach and four.——He flew

up the steps, and would directly have gone to the drawing-room, but Miss Arnault called in a low voice from the top of the stairs to prevent him, and hastening down, said, "Miss Vere will come directly; I shall tell them so, and do you go and speak to her. She will not tell me what it is that agitates her so dreadfully."

Instantly he obeyed—her chamber door was enough open for him to see her; she was kneeling beside the table, her hands folded across her forehead so as to shade her eyes, which from the attitude of her face were cast up to heaven. Her lips moved not, but the lines of her mouth were strongly drawn, and the anguish of emotion was visible in her whole appearance. The pang was however soon

over; her head sunk, and for a moment rested with her hands on the table.

"Now," said she, "I think I am prepared!"——

She arose, her countenance serene, solemn, and determined! The heroine advanced, and opened wide the door, but on seeing Belnard she started, and drew back.

"Do not fear me!" cried he, "at such a time as this, I think only of you! shall I see those gentlemen, and refuse them your presence?"

"Refuse?" she repeated.——

"Dearest Olivia!" he entreatingly ex-

claimed, "as a friend, I implore your permission to interfere?"

"No, no, no," she returned with quickness——"let me pass!—— I must indeed be gone."

"You fear them?---I know you do: this is the danger of which Lewis warned me, and charged me to shield you from."

"Danger——from a father?——O, dreadful!"

"A father!" Belnard repeated in astonishment.——"What new and strange mystery?"——

"No matter—no matter," she inter-

rupted; "let me pass—I have just wound up my senses for the meeting."——

"Then I will go with you," said Belnard, determinately.——"A good father must excite different emotions."

"True!" she returned; "yet he is my father."

"O, Olivia," exclaimed Belnard, catching her gown as she rushed by him; "let me protect you?—in the name of your sainted mother——"

"Protect me from such authority?"

"Yes—by a superior authority—in the character of your accepted husband, en-

title me to guard the person and peace that shall soon be mine."

"You know not what you ask?" said Olivia.——

Miss Arnault appeared.—"They are quite impatient to see you," said she;—"they are longing to see you."

"Now then," cried Olivia, "the FIAT IS ISSUED. I must have your support I find."

Belnard dared no longer resist. They descended the stairs with quickness, and advanced towards the door.—Olivia stopped—pressed her hand on her forehead, and her countenance and figure assumed a cast altogether new. She looked the

dignity of majesty—the firmness of magnanimity and the sweetness of a seraph; "I meet my father," said she; "let me not forget him, and myself."

She withdrew her arm from Belnard—stepped forward and opening the door, with increased determination entered. —Belnard closely followed.

The gentlemen who were standing in the window, as if watching, turned at the sound, and the elder a large handsome figure, hastily met and clasped her in his arms.

"My child, my child," cried he, "why did you leave your fond father?"

Olivia shrunk from his grasp, and re-

ceived his salute with emotions of horror. The young man waited for his turn to caress her; but though she had admitted the kiss of a father, from that of the other claimant she turned with undisguised detestation.

"Where is Marcella?" demanded the younger, whom nature had levelled to the lowest external degradations.

"She is with her husband;" calmly answered Olivia.

"Husband?" he repeated, and his eyes shot forth the glare of a hyena.

"Yes," she returned.——"She has been married some time."

"She ought first to have remembered," said the father of Olivia, "that she was already married to another."

"She shall hereafter remember it," rejoined his companion.——"I will wrest her from the scoundrel, if she is to be found."

"You will leave us my friend!" said Olivia, turning to Belnard with the sweetest composure, "as a favour I request it," she added, seeing him about to speak. "I shall see you in the next room presently."

He reluctantly obeyed.---Two servants were standing in the hall, and to avoid their sight, he went into the opposite room, leaving the door open.

"This then," said he, "is the *murder and desolation* so dreaded by Marcella; I have perhaps seen the murderer of the mother, and the misery of the daughters. Shall Olivia be subject to such power? No, not while my arm has life to preserve her!"——

With hasty strides he crossed and recrossed the room, or stood at the window to observe the equipage which had conveyed these long apprehended terrors. He remembered the father's embrace of hypocritical fondness; his accents of assumed tenderness; and he retraced malicious vengeance in the features of both men, under the semblance of moderation. Their appearance spoke them capable of black and premeditated crimes, yet by poverty they had not been tempted to

the perpetration of evil; the coach was splendid and spendidly appointed, the horses which drew it, and those which the footmen rode, were more than commonly fine, and the dresses of the postillions were fanciful and rich.

In a suspense almost too great for endurance, he listened to the voices from the drawing-room; but no loud sound reached his ear. At length the door suddenly opened, and Olivia came out; he sprung forward to meet her, but the eyes of her father were fixed on her. She made a sign not to be followed, and hastily went up stairs.

Again he walked about unknowing whether to speak to the stranger who continued standing in the door-way, as if

watching that she should not escape. Belnard could support the torture no longer, he determined at once to learn from Olivia either a confirmation or release from his fears, and instantly pursued her steps; but on reaching her chamber-door, he met her and Miss Arnault; she had a shawl wrapped about her, and the latter was in tears.

"Going!!!" exclaimed Belnard.

Miss Arnault would have answered, but tears prevented her, and she threw her arms round Olivia's neck.

"My dear, dear Ellen," Olivia cried, "tempt me not thus,——destroy not the strength I have obtained.—We must part —but I shall ever think of you with the

truest tenderness and affection.——You too, Colonel Belnard, accept my gratitude for benefits greater than I can ever return, and deeply felt as I am capable of feeling. My heart is truly sensible to the kindness of all my friends."

"Olivia!" exclaimed the astonished Belnard, "is it indeed possible that I am thus abandoned?"

"I doubt not," she replied, "that you will yet be happy, and let my last words enjoin you both, my dear friends, to remember me with equal regard. Your sentiments will I hope be reciprocal."

She kissed the cheek of Miss Arnault, who unable to suppress the loud lamenta-

tions of her grief turned back into the deserted chamber, and shut herself in.

"Excellent girl!" cried Olivia emphatically; "what would now be my misery if I felt unworthy of this tribute of affection? Adieu—Adieu my dear Colonel, my kindest truest friend and brother."—

"Yet, yet a moment, Olivia," exclaimed Belnard, detaining her as she would have quickly passed him——"think of the promise you pledged me, never to be the wife of another."——

"O, Belnard!" she interrupted; "forget that promise—forget every word, every incident that binds me to your heart——forget that you have ever known me or beheld me but as a friend!"

"Eternal punishment be my portion if I do forget you!" he cried; "or the promise you made me — I am entitled to your hand, and I have a right to command your preservation."

"Not from a father!" she returned, "his controul is absolute.——Adieu—adieu."—She quickly snatched her hand from his grasp—he caught her gown, and at the effort she made to withdraw it, he sunk on his knees.

"I will write; certainly I will write to you," she repeated, in a wild and hurried tone——"let me be gone."——

He released her, and covered his face with his hands, nor were his senses awakened to the horrors of his destiny,

till he heard the carriage wheels rapidly rolling from the door.

Starting frantically from the ground he then gazed around him——no living object met his eye, but the deep sobs and bitter complaints of Miss Arnault struck his ear. He fled from them with precipitation; and unable to endure scenes which to him had only been scenes of misery, he at once abandoned them by leaving the house, and on foot proceeded to Estlake Lodge.

CHAP. XIII.

A PRIZE.

ARGUMENTS of modern philosophy in support of the powers of reason, were familiar to the ear of Belnard. Entering the army at the age of seventeen, without any guidance but the strength of his natural and acquired character, it might well be supposed that he had sometimes listened to the sophistry of those casuists, who in the arrogance of their wisdom and taste erect the airy fabricks of fancy to the accommodation of passion and sensuality. A superstructure adorned

with so many attractive liberties to vice on the flattering basis of human dignity, presents a temptation but too irresistible; and not unfrequently the energy of an imagination highly refined completes the delusion. In those situations of life where pleasure spreads her snares, and youth covers the eye of judgement with a web of self-presumption, the early impressions of religion and virtue may be concealed, but if rightly inculcated, they are seldom obliterated: Belnard had in moments of weakness, admired the showy colouring produced by the pencil of these scientific destroyers; but he had never seriously admitted their justness and solidity, and in this hour of fierce anguish, he was compelled to turn for support to principles infinitely firmer

than the pride of reason, and the perfection of nature.

Yet willing as he might be to elude the oppressive hand of despair, he was surrounded by local circumstances which continually irritated recollection, and brought to his view the loss he had sustained. He inhabited a house which belonged to another, and appeared to have taken possession of it without being formally empowered to do so; and independent of the unpleasant ideas his own consciousness excited, it was also apparent that the name of Olivia might be implicated by public censure. The servants, however, continued to treat him as their master; every thing was under his controul, and as he had the affairs of the will to settle, and the several papers of his late friend

to look over, he resolved to remain in this now silent and lonely dwelling, till the promised letter from Olivia should point out the path he ought to pursue.

To prepare his mind for the performance of his duty was now necessary. He endeavoured to arrange his ideas, and exert every effort to recall his wandering thoughts by active employment; and the sincerity of his wishes to succeed were not wholly unavailing. Some days were however passed in calming his mind for this trial of fortitude, and after many severe struggles, and deep blushes of shame at his own weakness, he found himself enabled to set about the regulations of the various affairs preparatory to the execution of his trust.

But now, and not till now, he recollected the abrupt manner in which he had left Mr. Arnault's house, and having never received any message from the man of formality, he concluded him mortally offended. To deprecate his wrath was however the duty of the offender, and Belnard fearing to encounter again these scenes which must undo all the vigour of mind he had with so much difficulty regained, resolved on writing a full and immediate apology.

This purpose was however prevented by a visit from surgeon Medforth. The meeting was to Belnard extremely affecting, and the kind surgeon forbore any retrospect that could recall events, which from the public story of Miss Vere's situation, and his own observations, he

perceived were too complicated for a free discussion. For some time he spoke on indifferent subjects with the most indifferent air he could assume, but finding the Colonel again calm, he ventured to state the purport of his visit. Mr. Arnault he confessed was quite unreasonably offended; he would hear no justification of Colonel Belnard's conduct, and had declared that he would never again suffer him into his house.

"If he is inaccessible to apology," said the Colonel, "I may be sorry, but I certainly shall not petition for a mitigation of my sentence."

"As yet at least," returned surgeon Medforth, "it would be useless; but he has I am certain experienced a very great disappointment of a favourite con-

temptation: your continued residence after your friend's decease, he did not impute to Miss Vere."——

"To whom then?" hastily demanded Belnard.

"You are a modest man, Colonel," cried the surgeon, laughing; "but after receiving a bullet in the cause of a lady, you must not expect she could be ungrateful."

"Miss Arnault," returned Belnard, must know my sentiments for Miss Vere. Her father also cannot be ignorant of what I have lately taken no pains to conceal."

"Have you ever explained? Colonel."

"No—to them it was not necessary."

"And do you not know, that some people have a happy knack of turning the most obvious expressions to the meaning they most wish?"

"It may be so;" returned the Colonel: "but though I esteem and have an affection for Miss Arnault, I never treated her with the deference of love; or in any other way than I actually considered her—merely as an amiable child."

"She is as tall, and I fancy as old as Miss Vere?"

"Good God! Medforth," cried Belnard impatiently, "how can *you* persist in this accusation?

"Because," he replied, "I believe it wholly unfounded.——If people have eyes and will not see, and ears and will not hear, unless they see and hear according to the construction of their own senses, neither you or I can help it."

"I should indeed be concerned, "said the Colonel, "if to Miss Arnault I have caused any uneasiness; but her father's resentment is not worth a thought."

The surgeon very frankly declared he believed the pride of the perpendicular Mr. Arnault, and the nourished vanity of his daughter were the sentiments most wounded by this failure of their expectations; and though Miss Arnault might, he supposed, easily be induced to accept a handsome young soldier with the cer-

tain reversion of family honors, she yet deemed herself fully entitled to equal, or perhaps superior establishment. Having been brought up in the persuasion, that though she might confer honor by her hand, she never could receive any, she was from the age of fourteen so determined to refuse all offers inadequate to her merits, that in truth her merits very seldom found offers to refuse. "With such ideas," added the surgeon, "you may safely conclude that she is more mortified than grieved at your second desertion, and has highly approved of her father's spirited conduct in forbiding you his house."

"He is too obliging!" cried Belnard, piqued.

Surgeon Medforth then told him, that Miss Vere on taking leave of Miss Arnault had requested her trunks might remain in her care, till sent for; but Mr. Arnault thought the charge extremely disrespectful, and as Estlake Lodge was become Miss Vere's property, the trunks were then actually on the way to return to the abode from which they came, and where it was most right and fitting they should remain.

Mr. and Miss Arnault's displeasure and every thing else was forgotten in the combined sensations this intelligence exited. Surgeon Medforth would have rallied, but he saw the chord was too delicate to bear vibration, and took his leave.

Belnard stood in the window after the departure of his visiter, and soon hailed the sight he expected; the gate of the court opened to admit a cart which carried the two trunks, one ticketed with the name of Olivia, the other, of Marcella. He ordered them to be carried to the apartment they had formerly occupied, and handsomely rewarded the person who brought them.

In the possession of this treasure he now considered himself almost certain of soon again seeing Olivia; for though she might not *appear* to claim them, she must of course send, and her residence would thus become known to him. The expected letter he however supposed might reveal that present mystery, and now that he could with composure

reflect, he saw at least a possibility, if not a probability, that his again meeting her was not very distant.

But day after day elapsed, and week succeeded week, yet no letter arrived. A very short time had sufficed for the settlement of the Doctor's affairs, which were always kept in regularity; and Belnard found himself again without employment, and heart sickened by suspense. He frequently thought of going to London in search of her, but when again he recollected that she might not be in London, and that if she was he knew not by what name to enquire for her, he was unwilling to prolong the receipt of the letter, by removing from the place to which it would be addressed. The continued disappointment however

of every morning's post at last became too great for endurance, and he resolved on going to London or any where else that his conjectures might lead him to suppose she might be found.

He accordingly prepared to pursue this resolution, but on the very morning of his intended departure a packet of letters was brought him from the post, one of which was addressed in a female hand. His heart throbbed, and his hand shook almost too much to open it: but at length the effort succeeded; he beheld indeed the signature of---OLIVIA !---and eagerly read the following.

" I fear, my dear Sir, my silence may have occa-
" sioned to you some embarrassment in the disposition
" of the property you suppose to be mine;—my

" gratitude to the giver is of a nature little capable
" of being expressed, but I should ill requite it by
" any appropriation of his legacy, which, were he
" living, he must disapprove.—I have, in fact, no
" interest in it, or, situated as I am, can I ever expect
" to have:---by the time you receive this I shall
" have left England, probably never to return; and
" surrounded by affluence, I can have no temptation
" to the monopoly of riches accumulated for another.
" ---To the just owner, therefore, I restore them."

" To convince you however that my esteem for
" you is permanent, I yet reserve to myself a share
" in the disposal, provided only it meets your appro-
" bation. The house I blush to think should ever be
" considered as mine, yet as the law has made it so,
" I leave you a lawful surrender of it. The sum of
" money I have also legally made over to you, but if
" the circumstances of your fortune permit, I should
" rejoice to think that half of this was destined for
" the children of Sophia;---the other half to your
" own. It is the inheritance that of right belongs
" to them, and as the heirs of my respected guardian

" and benefactor, I feel an inexpressible pleasure in
" hoping they will be brought up to know my name
" with the interest of friendship. Perhaps to a mind
" truly delicate I have assumed arrogance in this re-
" quest, but it is still subject only to yourself;---
" whatever your prudence may suggest, must cer-
" tainly meet my entire and willing concurrence."

" And now, Sir, in taking my final leave of En-
" gland and its inhabitants, let me most particularly
" address myself to you? I grieve most truly that
" our acquaintance should have been attended with
" the pain of mind I cannot but believe you suffered;
" and notwithstanding my opinion, that wounds like
" these are soon healed, I yet deeply regret this was
" ever inflicted. Let me also assure you, that however
" I may have expressed myself---whatever deviation
" from your supposed character I may have disco-
" vered, I yet respect and esteem you in a degree
" infinitely higher than any living being, except Lewis
" and Marcella; they only are preferred to Colonel
" Belnard; but nature dictates this preference, and
" as such I entreat you to admit it. Of their fate

" I may be ignorant, but with their affection for
" you I am well acquainted; if you, Sir, feel it
" mutual, you will add to the obligations I ever must
" acknowledge, by admitting me to a participation."

" Adieu, my dear Sir!---may you be happy--
" contented---surrounded with blessings such as you
" merit, must ever, ever be the earnest, the anxious
" prayer of

" OLIVIA."

" P. S. The inclosed is the address of the banker
" with whom the deeds are deposited."

Belnard read this letter several times. His first sensations were delight; but this gave way to astonishment, and then to pique. An attachment such as his, deserved different treatment, and the torturing coolness of her language convinced

him that she had pronounced his sentence of condemnation, without leaving him the possibility of extenuating his conduct from the supposed censure. Her expressions of esteem stung him to the quick; they might be sincere, but they were cruelly chilling, and with mingled disappointment, indignation, and anguish, he threw the letter from his hand, and walked about the room.

"Capricious,—tyrannical woman!" he cried; "how does she abuse the power she possesses of making me wretched? but she shall never make me contemptible. This last act completes my cure."

Again he read her letter. To reject her gift was unavailing, as she had not left him the means to inform her of it;—

to accept it was wholly repugnant to his feelings: but the sum of money he resolved never should be his, and he pronounced the moiety she had appropriated to his children, a new instance of her premeditated and insulting cruelty."

"I will marry," said he, "to prove how effectually she has torn herself from my heart."

At length after repeated tours through the study, and repeated exclamations which equally exhausted his resentment and his spirits, he resolved on proceeding instantly to London, and try if by means of the banker he could not discover where she had lately resided, or to whither she was gone.

He arrived in town time enough to make his application, and a packet was delivered into his hands containing the papers he expected: but the persons he received it from, could give no information. It had been sent there with a note, or rather a memorandum specifying to whom it should be given.

Inexpressibly disappointed he returned to the coach, and opened the deeds. One was a conveyance of the house, furniture, &c. the other of the legacy in money. They were drawn and executed with the utmost regularity, and the particular words of the will, "*known by the name of*," were every where inserted before "*Olivia Vere.*" But on the back of these deeds were written also the name and residence of the attorney

by whom they were drafted, and to this residence Belnard instantly desired to be driven.

Fortunately the gentleman was at home, and freely informed him of every incident connected with the circumstance. A young lady had stopped at his house in a hackney coach about a month before, at the hour of eight in the evening. She alighted and was shewn into his private office, where she gave him a paper containing written directions for the deeds, and the fullest instructions respecting the manner they should be drawn; and the particular words of the will of the testator, were desired to be carefully inserted. She desired to know what day they would be prepared for her signature, as she must come to town

for the purpose, and urging him earnestly to be punctual to his own specified time he conducted her to the coach, which she ordered "*home.*"

"And did you not follow her?" impatiently demanded the Colonel.

He replied that he did not; for though a very lovely woman, and though the singularity of her coming at that hour in such an equipage, and without an attendant, certainly excited his curiosity, her manner permitted him no doubt of her character and rank. She was a little haughty, he said, but carried it off very well. On the evening he expected her, she again came, and as before in a hackney coach. She expressed herself much obliged that the deeds were finished ac-

cording to promise, and requested the witnesses to her signing them might be respectable. He accordingly called two gentlemen who happened to be in the house, and when the necessary forms were all concluded, she demanded the amount of the expences which she paid without examining the bill; and requested he would take the trouble to send the packet to the bankers, to whom she gave a direction. She then returned to her vehicle, and ordered it to be driven to R——'s the jeweller's in Oxford-street.

To Oxford-street, therefore, Belnard resolved to go, but after driving more than half the way, he recollected that he knew not by what name to ask for her, and returned to the attorney to learn a description of her dress and the precise even-

ing of this incident. The answer he now received was more satisfactory than he could hope: one of the witnesses had called just after he left the house, and the subject being mentioned he confessed he had pursued the coach, which stopt at the shop she directed, where she discharged it: the gentleman further added, that he supposed she lived there, as she went into the back parlour, and Mr. R—— seemed to know her extremely well.

Belnard was now certain of a discovery; but late as was the hour he could not bear delay, and proceeded instantly to ascertain all that he so anxiously wished to learn. On reaching Oxford-street the shops were shut, but he knocked at the private door, and was admitted.

Mr. R—— the jeweller, perfectly remembered the circumstance, and the lady; and going to a drawer in his shop he took from it a diamond necklace, in the centre of which was a medallion.

"Is that the lady, Sir?" he demanded.

Belnard started in amazement! it was Olivia herself! executed in the first stile of miniature, and though unusually small was a perfect likeness.

He seized it with avidity, and examined it with the most scrutinising attention:—the likeness became stronger to his eye, and he experienced a mixture of pleasure and pain, too great for immediate expression.

"I never saw a better likeness, Sir;" said the jeweller; "it was a pity the lady was obliged to sell it."

"Sell it?" repeated Belnard, a sudden sickness oppressing his heart.

"Yes, Sir. She brought it to me about a month ago and asked me to purchase it, observing, I could have no doubt it belonged to herself. The diamonds for their size are very fine, and as I had been commissioned by the duchess of A—— for one of this description I made no hesitation to buy it. Not being able however to ascertain the value without weighing the jewels, I gave her then a sum of money on account, and paid the remainder when she called again.

Belnard was much agitated!—that

Olivia had been necessitated to sell such an ornament perhaps for the very purpose of resigning that independence she was entitled to, harrowed up his soul; her motives for it were obvious, and her character again burst upon his view in full splendor.

"And where did she then go?" he demanded.

"I cannot tell, Sir. She requested to have a hackney coach called to the side door, and it drove up that street.

All chance of tracing her was now cut off; but her picture at all hazards he determined to possess. He asked the jeweller what price he had set on

the necklace, and was answered six hundred and seventy-five pounds. "I shall put an antique instead of the miniature," said Mr. R——"and it will look as handsome as now."

"And why remove the picture?" asked Belnard.

"I promised to do so, Sir. The lady told me she was leaving the kingdom, and obliged me to positively promise I would destroy it."

"Nay then," cried the Colonel, "if you break your promise, the sin be on my head. The picture I never will resign, and the duchess of A—— must be provided with another necklace."

The Jeweller remonstrated, but Belnard was positive: he held the gem, and taking from his pocket the money he had brought to town to lodge for the purpose so especially pointed out by Olivia: he deducted the price demanded, and bore off his prize.

His triumph was in this instant unbounded, he felt as if he had something to live for, and almost persuaded himself this was an omen that promised him much to hope. On arriving at the hotel, he examined his purchase, and finding the invaluable part could easily be divided from the diamonds, he soon slipped it from its station, and the top of the surrounding setting, yielded a passage to a ribbon, he quickly felt the image of Olivia pressing on his heart. To visions of

happiness he now involuntarily yielded his imagination, and though the principal object was at present obscured from him, he almost implicitly trusted to time for her restoration.

END OF VOL. II.

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